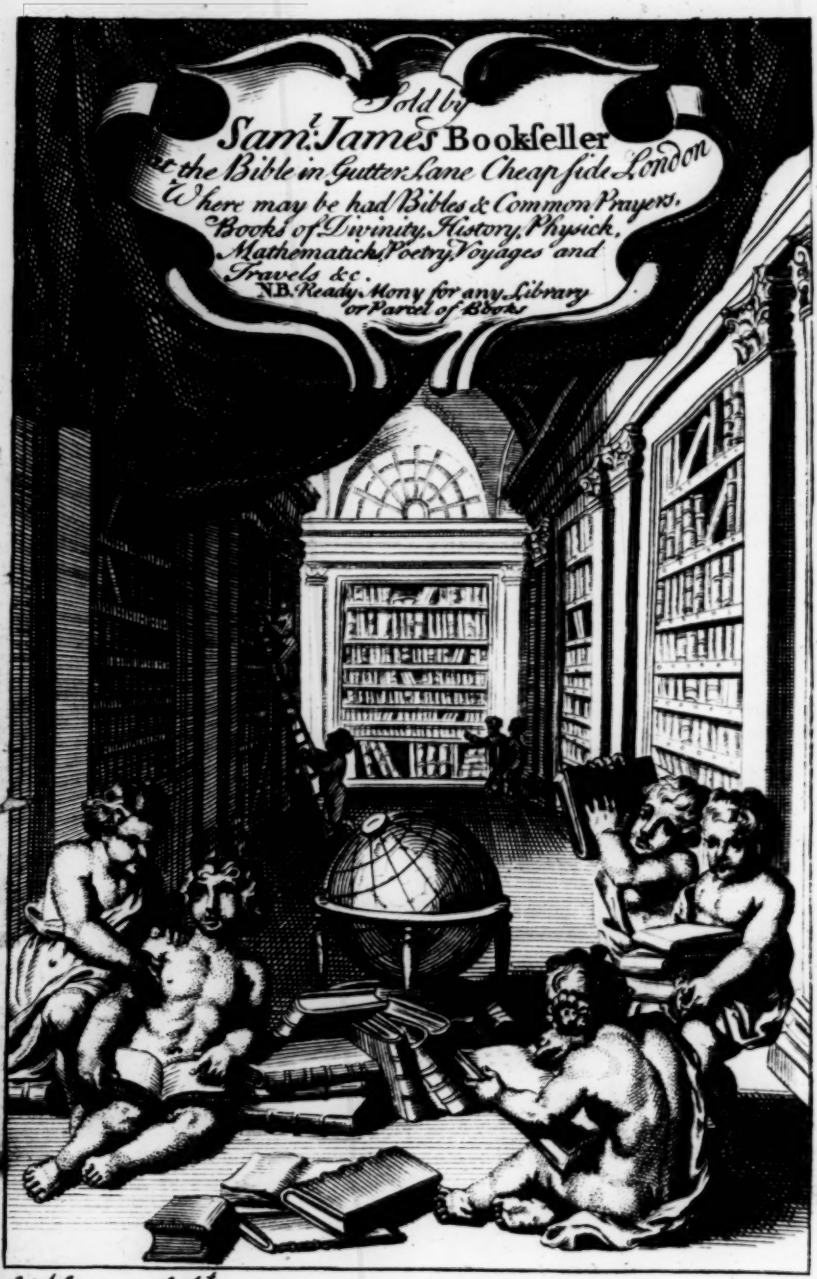

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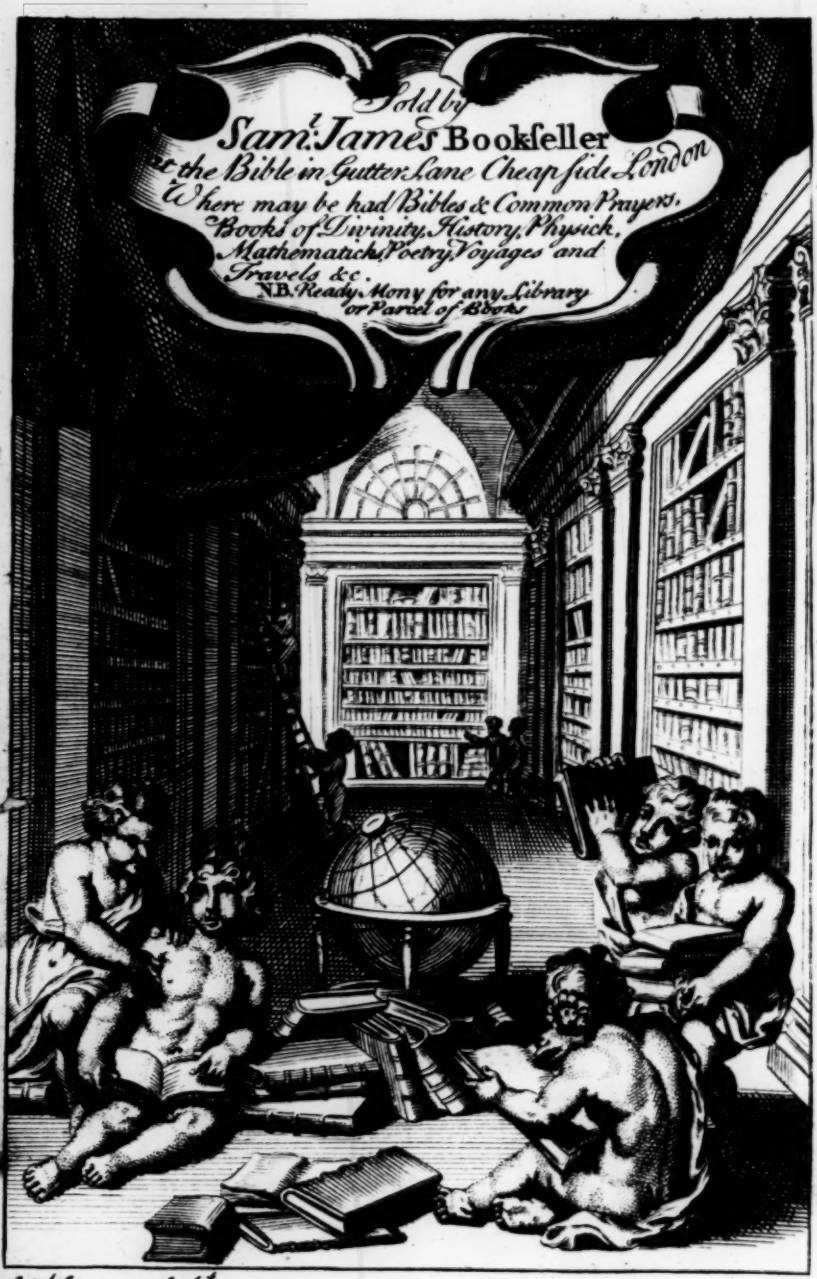

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Rachel Kincarden

THE

Nature, Power, Deceit, and Prevalency of the remainders of Indwelling-Sin IN BELIEVERS.

Together with the wayes of its Working, And Means of Prevention.

Opened, evinced and applyed, with a Resolution of sundry Cases of Conscience thereunto appertaining.

O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this Body of Death! I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord, Rom.7.24,25.

LONDON,

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THE PREFACE.

THAT the Doctrine of Original Sin, is one of the fundamental Truths of our Christian Profession, hath been alwayes owned in the Church of God. And an especial part it is of that peculiar possession of truth, which they enjoy, whose Religion towards God is built upon, and resolved into Divine Revelation. As the world by its Wisdom never knew God aright, so the wise Men of it were always utterly ignorant of this inbred evil in themselves and others. With us the Doctrine and Conviction of it, lie in the very foundation of all wherein we have to do with God, in reference unto our pleasing of him here, or obtaining the enjoyment of him hereafter. It is also known what influence it hath into the great truths concerning the Person of Christ, his mediation, the fruits and effects of it, with all the benefits that we are made partakers of thereby. Without

a ſuppoſition of it, not any of them can be truly known, or ſavingly believed. For this cauſe hath it been largely treated of by many holy and Learned Men, *both of old and of latter dayes. Some have laboured in the diſcovery of* its nature, *ſome of its* guilt *and demerit; by whom alſo the* truth *concerning it hath been vindicated from the oppoſition made unto it, in the paſt and preſent Ages. By moſt theſe things have been conſidered in their* full extent *and latitude, with reſpect unto all men by nature, with the eſtate and condition of them who are wholly under the power and guilt of it. How thereby men are diſenabled and incapacitated in themſelves to anſwer the obedience required either in the Law, or the Goſpel, ſo as to free themſelves from the* Curſe *of the one or to make themſelves partakers of the* bleſſing *of the other, hath been by many alſo fully evinced. Moreover, that there are* Remainders *of it abiding in* Believers *after their Regeneration and Converſion to God, as the Scripture abundantly teſtifies; ſo it hath been fully taught and confirmed; as alſo how the* guilt *of it is pardoned unto them, and by what means the* power *of it is weakened in them. All theſe things I ſay have been largely treated on, to the great benefit and edification of the Church. In what*

we

we have now in deſign, we therfore take them all for granted, *and endeavour only farther to carry on the diſcovery of it in its actings and oppoſitions to the* Law *and* Grace *of God in Believers. Neither do I intend the diſcuſſing of any thing that hath been controverted about it. What the* Scripture *plainly revealeth & teacheth concerning it, what Believers evidently find by* experience *in themſelves, what they may learn from the Examples and acknowledgments of others, ſhall be repreſented in a way ſuited unto the capacity of the meaneſt and weakeſt who is concerned therein. And many things ſeem to render the handling of it at this ſeaſon, not unneceſſary. The Effects and fruits of it which we ſee in the Apoſtaſies and backſlidings of many, the ſcandalous ſins and miſcarriages of ſome, and the courſe and lives of the moſt, ſeem to call for a due conſideration of it. Beſides of how great concernment a full and clear acquaintance with the power of this* Indwelling-Sin *(the matter deſign'd to be opened) is unto Believers, to ſtir them up to watchfulneſs and diligence, to faith and prayer, to call them to repentance, humility, & ſelf-abaſement, will appear in our progreſs. Theſe in general were the ends aimed at in the enſuing Diſcourſe, which being at firſt compoſed and delivered*

for the use and benefit of a few, *is now by the Providence of God made publick. And if the* Reader *receive any advantage by these weak endeavours, let him know that it is his duty, as to give Glory unto God, so to help them by his prayers, who in many temptations and Afflictions are willing to labour in the Vineyard of the Lord, unto which work they are called.*

CHAP.

CHAP. I.

Indwelling-Sin in Believers, treated of by the Apoſtle, Rom. 7. 21. *The Place explained.*

IT is of *Indwelling-ſin*, and that in the remainders of it in Perſons after their Converſion to God, with its power, efficacy, and effects, that we intend to treat. This alſo is the great deſign of the Apoſtle, to manifeſt and evince in *c.* 7. of the Epiſtle to the *Romans*. Many indeed are the conteſts about the principal ſcope of the Apoſtle in that *Chapter*, and in what ſtate the Perſon is, under the Law, or under Grace whoſe condition he expreſſeth therein. I ſhall not at preſent enter into that diſpute, but take that for granted, which may be undeniably proved and evinced; namely, that it is the condition of a *Regenerate Perſon*, with reſpect unto the remaining power of Indwelling-ſin, which is there propoſed, and exemplified by, and in the Perſon of the Apoſtle himſelf. In that diſcourſe therefore of his, ſhall the foundation be laid of what we have to offer upon this ſubject. Not that I ſhall proceed in an Expoſition of his Revelation of this Truth,

as it lies in its own contexture, but only make use of what is delivered by him, as occasion shall offer it self. And here first occurreth, that which he affirms, ver. 21. *I find then a Law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me.*

There are *four things* observable in these words.

First, The Appellation he gives unto *Indwelling-Sin*, whereby he expresseth its power and efficacy, it is a *Law*. For that which he terms a *Law*, in this verse, he calls in the foregoing, *sin that dwelleth in him.*

Secondly, The way whereby he came to the discovery of this *Law*, not absolutely, and in its own nature, but in himself, he *found* it; *I find a Law.*

Thirdly, The frame of his soul and inward Man with this Law of Sin, and under its discovery, *He would do good.*

Fourthly, The state and activity of this *Law*, when the soul is in that frame, when it would do good, *it is present with him.* For what ends and purposes we shall shew afterwards.

The first thing observable is the Compellation here used by the Apostle, he calls *Indwelling-Sin* a *Law*; It is a *Law.*

A *Law* is taken either properly, for a *directive Rule*; or improperly, for an *operative effective Principle*, which seems to have the force of a Law. In its first sense, it is a Moral Rule which directs and commands, and sundry wayes moves and regulates the mind, and the will, as to the things which it requires, or forbids. This is evidently the general nature and work of a Law. Some things

things it commands, ſome things it forbids, with *Rewards* and Penalties, which move and impel men to do the one, and avoid the other. Hence in a ſecondary ſenſe, an *inward principle*, that moves and enclines conſtantly unto any Actions, is called a Law. The principle that is in the *nature* of every thing, moving and carrying it towards its own end and reſt, is called the *Law of Nature*. In this reſpect every inward principle that inclineth and urgeth unto operations or actings ſuitable to it ſelf, is a Law. So *Rom.* 8. 2. The powerful and effectual working of the Spirit and grace of Chriſt in the hearts of Believers, is called the *Law of the Spirit of life*. And for this reaſon doth the Apoſtle here call *Indwelling-ſin* a Law. It is a powerful and effectual indwelling-principle, inclining and preſſing unto actions agreeable and ſuitable unto its own nature. This and no other is the intention of the Apoſtle in this expreſſion. For although that term, a Law, may ſometimes intend a *ſtate* and *condition*, and if here ſo uſed, the meaning of the words ſhould be, *I find that this is my condition, this is the ſtate of things with me*, that when I would do good evil is preſent with me, which makes no great alteration in the principal intendment of the place; yet properly it can denote nothing here, but the chief *ſubject* treated of. For although the name of a Law be variouſly uſed by the Apoſtle in this Chapter; yet when it relates unto *ſin*, it is nowhere applyed by him to the condition of the perſon, but only to expreſs either the nature, or the power of ſin it ſelf: ſo ver. 23. *I ſee another*

Law in my members, warring against the Law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity unto the law of sin which is in my Members. That which he here calls the *Law of his mind*, from the principal subject and seat of it, is in it self no other but the *Law of the Spirit of life*, which is in Christ Jesus, *chap.* 8. 2. or the effectual power of the Spirit of grace, as was said. But the *Law* as applyed unto *sin*, hath a double sense; for as in the first place, *I see a Law in my Members*, it denotes the being and nature of sin; so in the latter, *leading into captivity to the Law of sin which is in my Members*, it signifies its power & efficacy. And both these are comprised in the same name singly used, *ver.* 20. Now that which we observe from this *name*, or term of a *Law* attributed unto sin, is, That *There is an exceeding efficacy and power in the remainders of Indwelling-sin in Believers, with a constant working towards evil.*

Thus it is in Believers, 'tis a Law even *in them*, though not *to them*. Though its rule be broken, its strength weakned and impaired, its root mortified, yet it is a *Law* still of great force and efficacy. There where 'tis least felt, it is most powerful. Carnal men in reference unto spiritual & moral duties, are nothing but this Law, they do nothing but from it, and by it. It is in them a ruling and prevailing principle of all *moral* actions, with reference unto a supernatural and eternal end. I shall not consider it in them in whom it hath most power, but in them in whom its power is chiefly discovered and discerned, that is in Believers, in the others only in order to the

the farther conviction and manifestation thereof.

2dly, The Apostle proposeth the way whereby he discovered this Law in himself, εὑρίσκω ἄρα τὸν νόμον, *I find then*, or therefore a *Law*. He *found* it; it had been *told* him there was such a Law, it had been *preached* unto him. This convinced him, that there was a *Law of Sin*. But it is one thing for a man to know in general, that there is a *Law of Sin*: Another thing for a man to have an *experience* of the power of this Law of sin in himself. It is preached to all; all men that own the Scripture acknowledge it, as being declared therein; but they are but few that *know* it in themselves, we should else have more complaints of it than we have, and more contendings against it, and less fruits of it in the world. But this is that which the Apostle affirms; not that the *Doctrine* of it had been preached unto him, but that he found it by experience in himself. *I find a Law*; I have experience of its power and efficacy. For a man to find his sickness and danger thereon from its effects, is another thing than to hear a discourse about a disease from its causes. And this experience is the great preservative of all Divine Truths in the soul. This it is to know a thing indeed, in reality, *to know it for our selves*, when as we are taught it from the Word, so we find it in our selves. Hence we observe,

Secondly, *Believers have experience of the power and efficacy of Indwelling-Sin.* They *find* it in themselves, they *find* it as a Law. It hath a self-evidencing efficacy to them that are *alive* to discern it: They that find not its power, are under its

its Dominion. Whosoever contend against it, shall know and find, that it is present with them, that it is powerful in them. He shall find the *stream* to be strong, who swims against it, though he who rouls along with it, be insensible of it.

Thirdly, The general frame of Believers notwithstanding the inhabitation of *this Law of Sin*, is here also expressed. *They would do good.* This Law is present θέλουσι ἐμοὶ ποιεῖν τὸ καλόν. The habitual inclination of their will is unto good. This Law in them, is not a Law unto them, as it is to Unbelievers. They are not *wholly* obnoxious to its power, nor *morally* unto its commands. Grace hath the Soveraignty in their souls; This gives them a *Will* unto good; *they would do good*, that is, alwayes and constantly; 1 *John* 3.9. ποιῶν ἁμαρτίαν, *to commit sin*, is to make a trade of sin, to make it a mans business to sin; so it is said, a Believer doth not *commit sin*. And so ποιεῖν τὸ καλόν, to do that which is good; to will to do so; is to have the *habitual* bent and inclination of the will set on that which is good, that is, morally and spiritually good, which is the proper subject treated of; whence is our Third Observation.

There is, and there is through grace kept up in Believers, a constant and ordinarily prevailing will of doing good, notwithstanding the power and efficacy of Indwelling-Sin to the contrary.

This in their *worst* condition, distinguisheth them from Unbelievers in their *best*. The *Will* in unbelievers is under the power of the Law of sin. The opposition they make to sin, either in the root, or branches

brunches of it, is from their light, and their conſciences; the *will of ſinning* in them is never taken away. Take away all other conſiderations & hinderances, whereof we ſhall treat afterwards, and they would ſin willingly always. Their faint endeavours to anſwer their convictions, are far from *a will of doing that which is good*. They will plead indeed, that they would leave their ſins, if they could, and they would fain do better than they do. But it is the *working* of their Light and Convictions, not any ſpiritual *inclination* of their wills, which they intend by that expreſſion. For where there is a will of doing good, there is a choice of that which is good for its own excellency ſake, becauſe it is deſirable and ſuitable to the ſoul, and therefore to be preferred before that which is contrary. Now this is not in any unbelievers; they do not, they cannot ſo chuſe that which is ſpiritually good, nor is it ſo excellent or ſuitable unto any principle that is in them: only they have ſome deſires to attain that *end*, whereunto that which is good doth lead, and to avoid that evil which the neglect of it tends unto. And theſe alſo are for the moſt part ſo weak and languid in many of them, that they put them not upon any conſiderable endeavours; witneſs that luxury, ſloth, worldlineſs and ſecurity, that the generality of men are even drowned in. But in believers there is a will of doing good, an habitual diſpoſition and inclination in their wills unto that which is ſpiritually good. And where this is, it is accompanied with anſwerable effects. The will is the principle of our moral actions, and therefore unto the *prevailing*

vailing diſpoſition thereof, will the general courſe of our actings be ſuited. Good things will proceed from the good treaſures of the heart. Nor can this diſpoſition be evidenced to be in any but by its fruits. A will of doing good, without doing good, is but pretended.

Fourthly, There is yet another thing remaining in theſe words of the Apoſtle, ariſing from that reſpect that the *preſence* of ſin hath unto the *time* and *ſeaſon* of *duty*: *When I would do good*, (ſaith he) *evil is preſent with me.*

There are two thing to be conſidered in the *will of doing good*, that is in Believers.

Firſt, There is its *habitual reſidence* in them. They have always an *habitual inclination of will* unto that which is good. And this habitual preparation for good is always preſent with them, as the Apoſtle expreſſes it, ver. 18. of this Chapter.

Secondly, There are ſpecial *times* and *ſeaſons* for the exerciſe of that principle. There is a, *When I would do good*, a ſeaſon wherein this or that good, this or that duty is to be performed and accompliſhed, ſuitably unto the habitual preparation and inclination of the will.

Unto theſe two, there are two things in *Indwelling-ſin* oppoſed. To the *gracious principle* reſiding in the will, inclining unto that which is ſpiritually good, it is oppoſed as it is a *Law* that is a *contrary priciple* inclining unto evil, with an averſation from that which is good. Unto the ſecond, or the actual willing of this or that good in particular, unto this, *when I would do good*, is oppoſed the preſence of this Law, *evil is preſent with me*,

παρόκειται

παράκειται μοι τὸ κακόν; evil is at hand and ready to oppoſe the *actual accompliſhment* of the good aimed at. Whence,

Fourthly, *Indwelling-ſin is effectually operative in rebelling and inclining to evil, when the will of doing good is in a particular manner active, and inclining unto obedience.*

And this is the deſcription of him who is a Believer, and a ſinner, as every one who is the *former*, he is the *latter* alſo. Theſe are the contrary principles, and the contrary operations that are in him. The principles are a *will of doing good* on the one hand, from grace, and a *Law of ſin* on the other. Their adverſe actings and operations are inſinuated in thoſe expreſſions, *When I would do good, evil is preſent with me.* And theſe both are more fully expreſſed by the Apoſtle, *Gal.*5.17. *For the fleſh luſteth againſt the ſpirit, and the ſpirit againſt the fleſh, and theſe are contrary the one to the other; ſo that I cannot do the things that I would.*

And here lie the ſprings of the whole courſe of our obedience. An acquaintance with theſe ſeveral principles, and their actings, is the principal part of our wiſdom. They are, upon the matter, next to the free grace of God in our Juſtification by the blood of Chriſt, the only things wherein the glory of God and our own ſouls are concern'd. Theſe are the ſprings of our holineſs, and our ſins, of our joys and troubles, of our refreſhments and ſorrows. It is then all our concernments to be throughly acquainted with theſe things, who intend to walk with God, or to glorifie him in this world.

And

And hence we may ſee what *wiſdom* is required, in the guiding & management of our hearts & ways before God. Where the *ſubjects* of a Ruler are in ſewds & oppoſitions one againſt another, unleſs great *wiſdom* be uſed in the government of the whole, all things will quickly be ruinous in that State. There are theſe contrary principles in the hearts of Believers, and if they labour not to be ſpiritually wiſe, how ſhall they be able to ſteer their courſe aright? Many men live in the dark to themſelves all their days; what ever elſe they know, they know not themſelves. They know their outward eſtates, how *rich* they are, and the condition of their bodies as to health and ſickneſs they are careful to examine; but as to their *inward man*, and their principles as to God and Eternity, they know little or nothing of themſelves. Indeed few labour to grow *wiſe* in this matter, few ſtudy themſelves as they ought, are acquainted with the evil of their own hearts as they ought, on which yet the whole courſe of their obedience, and conſequently of their eternal condition doth depend. This therefore is our *wiſdom*, and it is a needful wiſdom, if we have any deſign to pleaſe God, or to avoid that which is a provocation to the eyes of his glory.

We ſhall find alſo in our inquiry hereinto, what *diligence* and watchfulneſs is required unto a Chriſtian converſation. There is a conſtant *enemy* unto it in every ones heart: and what an enemy it is we ſhall afterwards ſhow, for this is our deſign to diſcover him to the uttermoſt. In the mean time we may well bewail the woful ſloth and neg-

ligence

ligence that is in the moſt, even of Profeſſors. They live and walk as though they intended to go to heaven hood-winkt, and aſleep, as though they had no *enemy* to deal withall. Their miſtake therefore and folly will be fully laid open in our Progreſs.

That which I ſhall principally fix upon, in reference unto our preſent deſign, from this place of the Apoſtle, is that which was firſt laid down, namely, that *there is an exceeding efficacy and power in the remainder of indwelling-ſin in Believers, with a conſtant inclination and working towards evil.*

Awake therefore, all of you in whoſe hearts are any thing of the ways of God. Your *enemy* is not only *upon* you, as on *Sampſon* of old, but is *in you* alſo. He is at work by all ways of *force* and *craft*, as we ſhall ſee. Would you not diſhonour God and his Goſpel, would you not ſcandalize the Saints and ways of God, would you not wound your conſciences, and endanger your ſouls, would you not grieve the good and holy Spirit of God, the Author of all your comforts, would you keep your garments undefiled, and eſcape the woful temptations and pollutions of the days wherein we live; would you be preſerved from the number of the *Apoſtates* in theſe latter days? awake to the conſideration of this curſed *enemy*, which is the ſpring of all theſe and innumerable other evils, as alſo of the ruine of all the ſouls that periſh in this world.

CHAP. II.

Indwelling-Sin a Law. In what ſenſe it is ſo called. What kind of Law it is. An inward effective Principle called a Law. The power of ſin thence evinced.

THat which we have propoſed unto conſideration is the *power and efficacy of Indwelling-ſin.* The ways whereby it may be evinced are many. I ſhall begin with the *Appellation* of it in the place before mentioned, it is a *Law*; *I find a Law*, ſaith the Apoſtle. It is becauſe of its power and efficacy that it is ſo called; ſo is alſo the principle of grace in Believers the *Law of the ſpirit of life*, as we obſerved before, *Rom.* 8. 3. which is the *exceeding greatneſs of the power of God in them*, *Epheſ.* 1. 19. Where there is a *Law*, there is power.

We ſhall therefore ſhew both what belongs unto it, as it is a *Law* in general, and alſo what is peculiar or proper in it, as being *ſuch a Law* as we have deſcribed.

There are in general two things attending every *Law*, as ſuch.

Firſt, *Dominion. Rom.* 7. 1. *The Law hath dominion over a man whilſt he liveth*; κυριεύει τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, it *Lordeth* it over a man. Where any Law takes place, κυριεύει, it hath *dominion.* It is properly the *act of a Superiour*, and it belongs to its nature to exact obedience by way of dominion. Now there is a two-fold *dominion*, as there is a two-fold Law.

There

There is a *moral* authoritative dominion over a man, and there is a *real effective* dominion in a man. The firſt is an affection of the Law of God, the latter of the Law of ſin. The Law of ſin hath not in it ſelf a *moral dominion*, it hath not a rightful dominion or authority over any man, but it hath that which is equivalent unto it; whence it is ſaid βασιλεύειν, to *reign* as a King, *Rom.* 6. 12. and κυριεύειν, to *Lord* it, or have dominion, *ver.* 14. as a Law in general is ſaid to have, *chap.* 7. 1. But becauſe it hath loſt its *complete dominion*, in reference unto Believers, of whom alone we ſpeak, I ſhall not inſiſt upon it in this utmoſt extent of its power. But even *in* them it is a Law ſtill, though not a *Law unto* them; yet, as was ſaid, it is a Law *in* them. And though it have not a complete, and as it were a *rightful dominion* over them, yet it will have a *domination* as to ſome things in them. It is ſtill a Law, and that in them, ſo that all its actings are the actings of a Law; that is, it acts with power, though it have loſt its complete power of ruling in them. Though it be *weakened*, yet its nature is not *changed*. It is a Law ſtill, and therefore powerful. And as its particular workings (which we ſhall afterwards conſider) are the ground of this Appellation, ſo the term it ſelf teacheth us in general, what we are to expect from it, and what endeavours it will uſe for *dominion*, to which it hath been accuſtomed.

Secondly, A Law, as a Law, hath an efficacy to *provoke* thoſe that are obnoxious unto it unto the things that it requireth. A Law hath *Rewards* and *Puniſhments* accompanying of it. Theſe ſe-

cretly prevail on them to whom they are propoſed, though the things commanded be not much deſirable. And generally all Laws have their efficacy on the minds of men, from the *Rewards* and *Puniſhments* that are annexed unto them. Nor is this Law without this ſpring of power: it hath its rewards and puniſhments. The *pleaſures* of ſin are the *rewards* of ſin; a reward that moſt men loſe their ſouls to obtain. By this the Law of ſin, contended in *Moſes* againſt the Law of grace, *Heb.* 11. 25, 26, *He choſe rather to ſuffer afflictions with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleaſures of ſin for a ſeaſon; for he looked unto the recompence of reward.* The conteſt was in his mind between the Law of ſin, and the Law of grace. The motive on the part of the Law of ſin, wherewith it fought to draw him over, and wherewith it prevails on the moſt, was the *reward* that it propoſed unto him, namely that he ſhould have the preſent enjoyment of the *pleaſures of ſin*. By this it contended againſt the reward annexed unto the Law of Grace, called the *Recompence of reward*.

By this *ſorry reward* doth this Law keep the world in obedience to its commands. And experience ſhews us, of what power it is to influence the minds of men. It hath alſo *Puniſhments* that it threatens men with, who labour to caſt off its yoke. What ever evil, trouble or danger in the world attends Goſpel obedience, what ever hardſhip or violence is to be offered to the ſenſual part of our natures in a ſtrict courſe of mortification, ſin makes uſe of as if they were *puniſhments* attending the neglect of its commands. By theſe it

prevails

prevails on the *fearful*, who ſhall have no ſhare in life eternal, *Rev.* 21. 8. And it is hard to ſay by whether of theſe, its pretended rewards, or pretended puniſhments, it doth moſt prevail, in whether of them its greateſt ſtrength doth lie. By its *rewards* it inticeth men to ſins of commiſſion, as they are called, in ways and actions tending to the ſatisfaction of its luſts. By its *puniſhments* it induceth men to the omitting of duties, a courſe tending to no leſs a pernicious event than the former. By which of theſe the Law of ſin hath its greateſt ſucceſs in and upon the ſouls of men, is not evident, and that becauſe they are ſeldom or never ſeparated, but equally take place on the ſame perſons. But this is certain, that by tenders and promiſes of the pleaſures of ſin on the one hand, by threats of the deprivation of all ſenſual contentments; and the infliction of temporal evils on the other, it hath an exceeding efficacy on the minds of men, oftentimes of Believers themſelves. Unleſs a man be prepared to reject the reaſonings that will offer themſelves from the one and the other of theſe, there is no ſtanding before the *power* of this Law. The world falls before them every day. With what deceit and violence they are urged and impoſed on the minds of men, we ſhall afterwards declare; as alſo what advantages they have to prevail upon them. Look on the generality of men, and you ſhall find them wholly by theſe means at ſins diſpoſal. Do the profits and pleaſures of ſin lie before them, nothing can withhold them from reaching after them. Do difficulties and inconveniencies attend the duties of the

Gospel, they will have nothing to do with them, and so are wholly given up to the Rule and Dominion of this Law.

And this *light* in general we have into the power and efficacy of Indwelling-sin from the general nature of a *Law*, whereof it is partaker.

We may consider nextly what *kind of Law* in particular it is, which will farther evidence that power of it, which we are enquiring after. It is not an outward, written, commanding, directing *Law*, but an inbred, working, impelling, urging *Law*. A Law *proposed* unto us, is not to be compared for efficacy to a Law *inbred* in us. *Adam* had a Law of sin *proposed* to him in his temptation, but because he had no Law of Sin *inbred* and working in him, he might have withstood it. An *inbred* Law must needs be effectual. Let us take an example from that Law, which is contrary to this Law of Sin. The Law of God, was at first *inbred* and natural unto man, it was concreated with his faculties, and was their *rectitude* both in being and operation in reference to his end of living unto God, and glorifying of him. Hence it had an especial power in the whole soul, to enable it unto all obedience, yea, and to make all obedience *easie* and pleasant. Such is the power of an inbred Law. And though this Law as to the *rule* and *dominion* of it, be now by nature cast out of the soul, yet the remaining sparks of it, because they are inbred, are very powerful and effectual, as the Apostle declares, *Rom.* 2. 14, 15. Afterwards God renews this Law, and writes it in Tables of Stone; but what is the efficacy of this Law; will it now

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as it is external, and propoſed unto men, enable them to perform the things that it exacts and requires? not at all. God knew it would not, unleſs it were turned to an *internal Law* again; that is untill of a moral outward rule, it be turned into an inward real principle. Wherefore God makes his Law *internal* again, and implants it on the heart as it was at firſt, when he intends to give it power to produce obedience in his people, Jer. 31. 31, 32, 33. *I will put my Law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts.* This is that which God fixeth on, as it were upon a diſcovery of the inſufficiency of an outward Law leading men unto Obedience. The written Law, ſaith he, will not do it; Mercies and Deliverances from diſtreſs will not effect it; Trials and Afflictions will not accompliſh it; then ſaith the Lord, will I take another courſe; I will turn the *written Law*, into an *internal living Principle*, in their hearts, and that will have ſuch an efficacy, as ſhall aſſuredly *make* them my People, and *keep* them ſo. Now ſuch is this Law of Sin, it is an *Indwelling-Law*, *Rom.* 7. 17. It is *ſin that dwelleth in me*, ver. 20. *Sin that dwelleth in me*, ver. 21. It is *preſent with me*, ver. 23. It is *in my Members*; yea, it is ſo far in a man, as in ſome ſenſe it is ſaid to be the man himſelf, ver. 18. *I know that in me, that is in my fleſh there dwelleth no good thing.* The *fleſh*, which is the Seat and Throne of this Law, yea, which indeed is this Law, is in ſome ſenſe the man himſelf, as *Grace* alſo is the new man. Now from this conſideration of it, that it is an *Indwelling-Law* inclining and moving to ſin, as an inward habit or Principle, it

hath ſundry advantages increaſing its ſtrength and farthering its power. As,

Firſt, It alwayes *abides* in the ſoul, it is never abſent. The Apoſtle twice uſeth that expreſſion, it *dwelleth* in me. There is its conſtant reſidence and habitation. If it *came* upon the ſoul only at certain ſeaſons, much obedience might be perfectly accompliſhed in its abſence. Yea, and as they deal with *uſurping Tyrants*, whom they intend to thruſt out of a City, the gates might be ſometimes ſhut againſt it, that it might not return. The ſoul might *fortifie* it ſelf againſt it. But the ſoul is its *home*, there it *dwells*, and is no wanderer. Where ever you are, whatever you are about, this Law of Sin is alwayes *in you*. In the beſt that you do, and in the worſt. Men little conſider what a dangerous companion is alwayes at *home* with them. When they are in Company, when alone, by night or by day, all is one, ſin is with them. There is a living *coal* continually in their houſes, which if it be not looked unto, will *fire* them, and it may be *conſume* them. O the woful ſecurity of poor ſouls! How little do the moſt of men think of this *Inbred* Enemy, that is never from home! How little for the moſt part doth the *watchfulneſs* of any Profeſſors anſwer the danger of their ſtate and condition.

Secondly, It is alwayes *ready* to apply it ſelf to every end and purpoſe that it ſerves unto. It doth not only *dwell in me*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *but when I would do good, it is preſent with me*: There is ſomewhat more in that expreſſion, than meer *indwelling*. An *Inmate* may dwell in an houſe, and yet not be alwayes medling with what the good

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man of the houſe hath to do, (that ſo we may keep to the alluſion of *Indwelling*, uſed by the Apoſtle.) But it is ſo with this Law, it doth ſo *dwell* in us, as that it will be *preſent with us* in every thing we do, yea, oftentimes when with moſt *earneſtneſs* we deſire to be quit of it, with moſt *violence* it will put it ſelf upon us: *When I would do good, it is preſent with me.* Would you pray, would you hear, would you give Alms, would you meditate, would you be in any duty acting faith on God, and love towards him, would you work righteouſneſs, would you reſiſt temptations, this troubleſome perplexing *Indweller* will ſtill more or leſs put it ſelf upon you, and be preſent with you; ſo that you cannot perfectly and compleatly accompliſh the thing that is good, as our Apoſtle ſpeaks, *ver.* 18. Sometimes men by hearkning to their temptations, do ſtir up, excite and provoke their luſts; and no wonder if then they find them *preſent* and active. But it will be ſo, when with all our endeavours we labour to be free from them. This Law of Sin dwells in us, that is, it adheres as a depraved principle unto our *minds* in *darkneſs*, and vanity, unto our Affections in ſenſuality, unto our wills in a loathing of, and averſation from that which is good, and by ſome, more, or all of theſe, is continually putting it ſelf upon us, in inclinations, motions, or ſuggeſtions to evil, when we would be moſt gladly quit of it.

Thirdly, It being an indwelling-Law, it applyes it ſelf to its work with great *facility* and eaſineſs, like the ſin that doth ſo *eaſily beſet us*, *Heb.* 12. 1. It doth a great *facility* and eaſineſs in the application of

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it ſelf unto its work; it needs no doors to be opened unto it, it needs no Engines to work by. The ſoul cannot apply it ſelf to any duty of a man, but it muſt be by the exerciſe of thoſe *faculties* wherein this Law hath its reſidence. Is the Underſtanding or the *Mind* to be applyed unto any thing? there it is in ignorance, darkneſs, vanity, folly, madneſs. Is the *Will* to be engaged, there it is alſo in ſpiritual deadneſs, ſtubborneſs, and the roots of obſtinacy? Is the heart and *Affections* to be ſet on work, there it is in inclinations to the world, and preſent things, and ſenſuality, with proneneſs to all manner of defilements? Hence it is *eaſie* for it to inſinuate it ſelf into all that we do, and to hinder all that is good, and to further all ſin and wickedneſs. It hath an *intimacy*, an inwardneſs with the ſoul, and therefore in all that we do, doth eaſily beſet us. It poſſeſſeth thoſe very faculties of the ſoul, whereby we muſt do, what we do, what ever it be, good or evil. Now all theſe advantages it hath as it is a *Law*, as an *Indwelling-Law* which manifeſts its power and efficacy. It is alwayes reſident in the ſoul, it puts its ſelf upon all its actings, and that with eaſineſs and facility.

This is that *Law* which the Apoſtle affirms, that he *found* in himſelf, this is the title that he gives unto the powerful and effectual remainders of Indwelling-Sin, even in Believers, and theſe general evidences of its power from that Appellation have we. Many there are in the world, who *find* not this Law in them, who whatever they have been taught in the word, have not a ſpiritual ſenſe and experience of the power of Indwelling-Sin, and that

that becauſe they are wholly under the Dominion of it. They find not that there is *darkneſs* and folly in their minds, becauſe they are darkneſs it ſelf, and darkneſs will diſcover nothing. They find not *deadneſs* and an indiſpoſition in their hearts and wills to God, becauſe they are *dead* wholly in treſpaſſes and ſins. They are at peace with their luſts, by being in bondage unto them. And this is the ſtate of moſt men in the world, which makes them wofully deſpiſe all their eternal concernments. Whence is it that men follow and purſue the world with ſo much greedineſs, that they neglect Heaven, and life, and immorrality for it every day? Whence is it that ſome purſue their ſenſuality with delight, they will drink, and revel, and have their ſports, let others ſay what they pleaſe? Whence is it that ſo many live ſo unprofitably under the word, that they underſtand ſo little of what is ſpoken unto them, that they practiſe leſs of what they underſtand, and will by no means be ſtirred up to anſwer the mind of God in his calls unto them? It is all from this Law of Sin, and the power of it that rules and bears ſway in Men, that all theſe things do proceed; but it is not ſuch perſons of whom at preſent we particularly treat.

From what hath been ſpoken, it will enſue, that if there be ſuch a Law in Believers, it is doubtleſs their duty to *find* it out, to find it ſo to be.

The more they find its power, the leſs they will feel its effects. It will not at all advantage a man to have an *hectical* diſtemper, and not to diſcover it; a fire lying ſecretly in his houſe, and not to know

know it. So much as Men find of this Law in them, so much they will *abhor* it and themselves, and no more. Proportionably also to their discovery of it, will be their *earnestness* for Grace; nor will it rise higher. All watchfulness and *diligence* in obedience will be answerable also thereunto. Upon this one hinge, or finding out, and experiencing the power and the efficacy of this Law of Sin, turns the whole course of our lives. Ignorance of it breeds senslesness, careleſness, sloth, security and pride, all which the Lords soul abhors. Eruptions into great, open, conscience-wasting, scandalous sins, are from want of a due spiritual consideration of this Law. Enquire then how it is with your souls, what do you find of this Law, what experience have you of its power and efficacy? Do you find it dwelling in you, alwayes present with you, exciting it self, or putting forth its poison with facility and easiness, at all times, in all your duties, *when you would do good*? what humiliation, what self-abasement, what intensness in prayer, what diligence, what watchfulness doth this call for at your hands? What spiritual wisdom do you stand in need of? What supplies of Grace, what assistance of the Holy Ghost will be hence also discovered? I fear we have few of us a diligence proportionable to our danger.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

The Seat or ſubject of the Law of Sin. The Heart, What meant thereby. Properties of the Heart as poſſeſſed by ſin. Unſearchable. Deceitful. Whence that Deceit ariſeth. Improvements of theſe Conſiderations.

HAving manifeſted *Indwelling-Sin* whereof we treat in the remainders of it in Believers, to be a *Law*, and evinced in general, the power of it from thence, we ſhall now proceede to give particular inſtances of its efficacy and advantages, from ſome things that generally relate unto it as ſuch. And theſe are three. Firſt, Its *ſeat* and ſubject: Secondly, Its *natural* properties; and Thirdly, Its *operations* and the manner thereof, which principally we aim at, and ſhall attend unto.

Firſt, For the *Seat* and ſubject of this Law of Sin, the Scripture every where aſſigns it to be the *heart*. There *Indwelling-Sin* keeps its eſpecial reſidence. It hath invaded and poſſeſſed the Throne of God himſelf, Eccleſ. 9. 3. *Madneſs is in the heart of men whileſt they live.* This is their madneſs, or the root of all that madneſs which appears in their lives, Matth. 15. 19. *Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, Murders, Adulteries, Fornications, Theſts, falſe Witneſs, Blaſphemies, &c.* There are many outward temptations and provocations that befall men, which excite and ſtir them up unto theſe evils. But they do but as it were, open the Veſſel,

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and let out what is laid up and ſtored in it. The root, riſe, and ſpring of all theſe things is in the *heart*. Temptations and occaſions put nothing into a man, but only draw out what was in him before. Hence is that ſummary deſcription of the whole work and effect of this Law of ſin, Gen. 6. 5. *Every imagination of the thoughts of Mans heart is only evil continually*; So alſo, *Chap.* 8. 21. The whole work of the Law of Sin, from its firſt riſe, its firſt coyning of actual ſin, is here deſcribed; and its ſeat, its work-houſe, is ſaid to be the *heart*. And ſo it is called by our Saviour, *The evil treaſure of the heart*, Luke 6. 45. *An evil man, out of the evil treaſure of his heart, bringeth forth evil things.* This *treaſure* is the prevailing principle of moral actions that is in men. So in the beginning of the Verſe, our Saviour calls *Grace* the *good treaſure* of the heart of a good man, whence that which is good doth proceed. It is a principle conſtantly and *abundantly* inciting and ſtirring up unto, and conſequently bringing forth actions conformable, and like unto it, of the ſame kind and nature with its ſelf. And it is alſo called a *treaſure* for its abundance. It will never be exhauſted, it is not waſted by mens ſpending on it: yea, the more laviſh men are of this ſtock, the more they draw out of this treaſure, the more it grows and abounds: As men do not ſpend their Grace, but increaſe it by its exerciſes, no more do they their Indwelling-Sin. The more men exerciſe their Grace in duties of obedience, the more it is ſtrengthened and encreaſed. And the more men exert and put forth the fruits of their luſt, the more is that enraged and encreaſed in them.

them. It feeds upon its ſelf, ſwallows up its own poyſon, and grows thereby. The more men ſin, the more are they inclined unto ſin. It is from the *deceitfulneſs* of this Law of Sin, whereof we ſhall ſpeak afterwards at large, that men perſwade themſelves, that by this or that particular ſin, they ſhall ſo ſatisfie their luſts, as that they ſhall need to ſin no more. Every ſin increaſeth the *principle*, and fortifieth the habit of ſinning. It is an *evil treaſure* that increaſeth by doing evil. And where doth this treaſure lye? It is in the *heart*, there it is laid up, there it is kept in ſafety. All the men in the world, all the Angels in Heaven, cannot diſpoſſeſs a man of this treaſure, it is ſo ſafely ſtored in the heart.

The *heart* in the Scripture is variouſly uſed. Sometimes for the *mind* and underſtanding; ſometimes for the *will*; ſometimes for the *Affections*; ſometimes for the *Conſcience*; ſometimes for the whole ſoul. Generally it denotes the *whole ſoul of man*, and all the faculties of it, not abſolutely, but as they are all one principle of moral operations, as they all concurr in our doing good or evil. The *mind* as it enquireth, diſcerneth, and judgeth what is to be done, what refuſed; the *Will*, as it *chuſeth*, or *refuſeth*, and avoids; the *Affections* as they *like* or *diſlike*, cleave to, or have an averſation from that which is propoſed to them; the *conſcience* as it warns, and determines, are all together called the *heart*. And in this ſenſe it is that we ſay the ſeat and ſubject of this Law of Sin is the *heart* of man. Only we may add, that the Scripture ſpeaking of the heart, as the principle of mens good or evil actions,

actions, doth uſually inſinuate together with it two things belonging unto the manner of their performance.

Firſt, A *ſuitableneſs* and pleaſingneſs unto the ſoul in the things that are done. When men take delight, and are pleaſed in and with what they do, they are ſaid to do it *heartily* with their whole hearts. Thus when God himſelf bleſſeth his People in love and delight, he ſayes, he doth it with *his whole heart, and his whole ſoul*, Jer. 32. 41.

Secondly, Reſolution and conſtancy in ſuch actions. And this alſo is denoted in the *Metaphorical* expreſſion before uſed of a *Treaſure*, from whence men do conſtantly take out the things which either they ſtand in need of; or do intend to uſe.

This is the ſubject, the ſeat, the dwelling place of this Law of Sin. The *heart* as it is the entire principle of moral operations, of doing good or evil, as out of it proceed good or evil. Here dwells our Enemie: This is the Fort, the *Cittadel* of this Tyrant, where it maintains a rebellion againſt God all our dayes. Sometimes it hath more ſtrength, and conſequently more ſucceſs; ſometimes leſs of the one, and of the other, but is alwayes in rebellion whileſt we live.

That we may in our paſſage take a little view of the ſtrength and power of ſin from this ſeat and ſubject of it, we may conſider one or two properties of the heart that exceedingly contribute thereunto. It is like an Enemy in war, whoſe ſtrength and power, lye not only in his *numbers*, and force of Men or Arms, but alſo in the unconquerable Forts that he doth poſſeſs. And ſuch is

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the *heart* to this enemy of God and our ſouls, as will appear from the properties of it, whereof one or two ſhall be mentioned.

Firſt, It is *unſearchable. Jer.* 17. 9, 10. *Who can know the heart? I the Lord ſearch it.* The heart of man is pervious to God only; hence he takes the honour of *ſearching the heart* to be as peculiar to himſelf, and as fully declaring him to be God, as any other glorious Attribute of his Nature. We know not the hearts of one another, we know not *our own hearts* as we ought. Many there are that know not their hearts as to their general bent and diſpoſition, whether it be good or bad, ſincere and ſound, or corrupt and naught; but no one knoweth all the ſecret *intrigues*, the windings and turnings, the actings and averſations of his own heart. Hath any one the perfect meaſure of his own light and darkneſs? Can any one know what actings of chuſing or averſation his Will will bring forth, upon the propoſal of that endleſs variety of objects that it is to be exerciſed with? Can any one traverſe the various mutability of his affections? Do the ſecret ſprings of acting and refuſing in the ſoul, lie before the eyes of any man? Doth any one know what will be the motions of the mind or will, in ſuch and ſuch conjunctions of things? Such a ſuiting of objects, ſuch a pretenſion of reaſonings, ſuch an appearance of things deſirable? All in heaven and earth but the *Infinite* All-ſeeing God, are utterly ignorant of theſe things. In this *unſearchable heart* dwells the Law of ſin, and much of its ſecurity, and conſequently of its ſtrength, lies in this, that it is paſt our finding

out. We fight with an enemy whoſe *ſecret ſtrength* we cannot diſcover, whom we cannot follow into its retirements. Hence oftentimes, when we are ready to think ſin quite ruined, after a while we find it was but out of ſight. It hath coverts and retreats in an *unſearchable heart*, whither we cannot purſue it. The ſoul may perſwade it ſelf all is well, when ſin may be ſafe in the hidden darkneſs of the mind, which 'tis impoſſible that he ſhould look into, for what ever makes manifeſt is *light*. It may ſuppoſe the *will of ſinning* is utterly taken away, when yet there is an unſearchable reſerve for a more ſuitable object, a more vigorous temptation than at preſent it is tried withal. Hath a man had a conteſt with any luſt, and a bleſſed victory over it by the holy Ghoſt, as to that preſent trial; when he thinks it is utterly expelled, he ere long finds that it was but retired out of ſight. It can lie ſo cloſe in the minds darkneſs, in the wills indiſpoſition, in the diſorder and carnality of the affections, that no eye can diſcover it. The beſt of our wiſdom is but to watch its firſt appearances, to catch its firſt *under-earth heavings* and workings and to ſet our ſelves in oppoſition to them; for to follow it into the ſecret corners of the *heart*, that we cannot do. It is true, there is yet a relief in this caſe, namely that he to whom the work of deſtroying the Law of ſin, and body of death in us is principally committed, namely the holy Ghoſt, comes with his Ax to the very root, neither is there any thing in an unſearchable heart that is not open and naked unto him, *Heb.* 4. 12. But we in a way of duty may hence ſee what an enemy we have to deal withall. Secondly,

Secondly, As it is unſearchable, ſo it is *deceitful*, as in the place above mentioned; it is *deceitful above all things*, incomparably ſo. There is great *deceit* in the dealings of men in the world, great in their counſels and contrivances in reference to their affairs private and publick; great deceit in their words and actings: the world is full of deceit and fraud. But all this is nothing to the *deceit* that is in mans heart *towards himſelf*, for that is the meaning of the expreſſion in this place, and not towards others. Now incomparable deceitfulneſs, added to *unſearchableneſs*, gives a great addition and encreaſe of ſtrength to the Law of ſin, upon the account of its ſeat and ſubject. I ſpeak not yet of the deceitfulneſs of ſin it ſelf, but the deceitfulneſs of the *heart* where it is ſeated. *Prov.* 26. 25. *There are ſeven abominations in the heart*; that is, not only many, but an abſolute complete number, as *ſeven* denotes: and they are ſuch abominations as conſiſt in deceitfulneſs; ſo the caution fore-going inſinuates, *Truſt him not*; for it is only *deceit* that ſhould make us *not to truſt* in that degree and meaſure which the object is cabable of.

Now this *deceitfulneſs* of the heart, whereby it is exceedingly advantaged in its harbouring of ſin, lies chiefly in theſe two things.

Firſt, That it abounds in *contradictions*, ſo that it is not to be found and dealt withall according to any conſtant rule, and way of procedure. There are ſome men that have much of this from their natural conſtitution, or from other cauſes in their converſation. They ſeem to be made up of *contradictions*; ſometimes to be very *wiſe* in their affairs,

ſometimes very *fooliſh*; very open, and very reſerved; very *facile*, and very obſtinate; very eaſie to be entreated, and very revengeful, all in a remarkable height. This is generally accounted a bad character, and is ſeldom found but when it proceeds from ſome notable predominant luſt. But in general, in reſpect of moral good or evil, duty or ſin, it is ſo with the heart of every man; flaming hot, and key cold; weak, and yet ſtubborn; obſtinate, and facile. The frame of the heart is ready to *contradict* it ſelf every moment. Now you would think you had it all for ſuch a frame, ſuch a way; anon it is quite otherwiſe: ſo that none know what to expect from it. The riſe of this is the diſorder that is brought upon all its faculties by ſin. God created them all in a perfect harmony and union. The Mind and Reaſon were in perfect ſubjection and ſubordination to God, and his Will; the Will anſwered in its choice of good; the diſcovery made of it by the mind; the Affections conſtantly and evenly followed the Underſtanding and Will. The minds ſubjection to God was the ſpring of the orderly and *harmonious* motion of the ſoul, and all the wheels in it. That being diſturbed by ſin, the reſt of the faculties move croſs and contrary one to another; the Will chuſeth not the good which the Mind diſcovers, the Affections delight not in that which the Will chuſeth, but all jar and *interfere*, croſs and rebel againſt each other. This we have got by our falling from God. Hence ſometimes the Will leads, the Judgment follows. Yea, commonly the Affections that ſhould attend upon all, get the ſovereignty,

vereignty, and draw the whole ſoul captive after them. And hence it is, as I ſaid, that the heart is made up of ſo many *contradictions* in its actings. Sometimes the mind retains its ſovereignty, and the affections are in ſubjection, and the will ready for its duty. This puts a good face upon things. Immediately the rebellion of the affections, or the obſtinacy of the will take place and prevail, and the whole *Scene* is changed. This, I ſay, makes the heart *deceitful* above all things; it agrees not at all in it ſelf, is not conſtant to it ſelf, hath no order that it is conſtant unto, is under no certain conduct that is ſtable, but if I may ſo ſay, hath a *rotation* in it ſelf, where oft-times the *feet* lead and guide the whole.

Secondly, Its deceit lies in its *full promiſings* upon the firſt appearance of things. And this alſo proceeds from the ſame principle with the former. Sometimes the affections are *touched* and wrought upon, the whole heart appears in a fair frame, all promiſeth to be well. Within a while the whole frame is changed; the mind was not at all affected or turned; the affections a little acted their parts and are gone off, and all the fair promiſes of the heart are departed with them. Now add this *deceitfulneſs* to the *unſearchableneſs* before mentioned, and we ſhall find, that at leaſt the difficulty of dealing effectually with ſin in its ſeat and throne, will be exceedingly encreaſed. A deceiving and a deceived heart, who can deal with it? eſpecially conſidering that the heart imploys all its deceits unto the ſervice of ſin, contributes them all to its furtherance. All the diſorder that is in the heart,

all its falſe promiſes, and fair appearances, promote the intereſt and advantages of ſin. Hence God cautions the people to look to it, leſt *their own hearts ſhould entice and deceive them.*

Who can mention the treacheries and deceits that lie in the heart of man? It is not for nothing that the holy Ghoſt ſo expreſſeth it, *It is deceitful above all things*; uncertain in what it doth, and falſe in what it promiſeth. And hence moreover it is, amongſt other cauſes, that in the purſuit of our war againſt ſin, we have not only the old work to go over and over, but new work ſtill while we live in this world; ſtill new ſtratagems and wiles to deal withall, as the manner will be where unſearchableneſs and deceitfulneſs are to be contended with.

There are many other properties of this ſeat and ſubject of the Law of ſin, which might be inſiſted on to the ſame end and purpoſe, but that would too far divert us from our particular deſign; and therefore I ſhall paſs theſe over with ſome few conſiderations.

Never let us reckon that our work in contending againſt ſin, in crucifying, mortifying, and ſubduing of it, is at an end. The place of its habitation is *unſearchable*; and when we may think that we have throughly won the field, there is ſtill ſome reſerve remaining that we ſaw not, that we knew not of. Many Conquerors have been ruined by their careleſneſs after a victory; and many have been ſpiritually wounded after great ſucceſſes againſt this enemy. *David* was ſo, his great ſurprizal into ſin was after a long profeſſion, manifold experiences

experiences of God, and watchful keeping himself from his iniquity. And hence in part hath it come to pass, that the profession of many hath declined in their *old age*, or riper time, which must more distinctly be spoken to afterwards. They have given over the work of mortifying of sin, before their work was at an end. There is no way for us to pursue sin in its unsearchable habitation, but by being endless in our pursuit. And that command of the Apostle which we have, *Colos.* 3. 5. on this account is as necessary for them to observe, who are towards the end of their race, as those that are but at the beginning of it. *Mortifie therefore your members that are on the earth*; be always doing it whilst you live in this world. It is true, great ground is obtained, when the work is vigorously and constantly carried on; sin is much weakened, so that the soul presseth forwards towards perfection. But yet the work must be *endless*, I mean whilst we are in this world. If we give over, we shall quickly see this enemy exerting it self with new strength and vigour. It may be, under some great affliction, it may be in some eminent enjoyment of God, in the sense of the sweetness of blessed communion with Christ, we have been ready to say, that there was an end of sin, that it was dead and gone for ever: But have we not found the contrary by experience? hath it not manifested that it was only retired into some unsearchable recesses of the heart, as to its in-being and nature, though it may be greatly weakened in its power? Let us then reckon on it, that there is no way to have our work done, but by always doing of it; and

he who dies *fighting* in this warfare, dies assuredly a *Conqueror*.

Secondly, Hath it its residence in that which is *various*, inconstant, *deceitful* above all things, this calls for perpetual *watchfulness* against it. An open enemy that deals by *violence* only, always gives some respite; you know where to have him, and what he is doing, so as that sometimes you may sleep quietly without fear: But against adversaries that deal by deceit and treachery, (which are long swords, and reach at the greatest distance) nothing will give security but perpetual *watchfulness*. It is impossible we should in this case be too jealous, doubtful, suspicious, or watchful. The heart hath a thousand wiles and deceits, and if we are in the least off from our watch, we may be sure to be surprised. Hence are those reiterated commands and cautions given for *watching*, for being circumspect, diligent, careful, and the like. There is no living for them who have to deal with an enemy *deceitful above all things*, unless they persist in such a frame. All cautions that are given in this case are necessary, especially that, *remember not to believe*. Doth the heart promise fair, rest not on it, but say to the Lord Christ, Lord, do thou undertake for me. Doth the Sun shine fair in the morning, reckon not therefore on a fair day; the clouds may arise and fall: though the morning give a fair appearance of serenity and peace, turbulent affections may arise, and cloud the soul with sin and darkness.

Thirdly then, commit the whole matter with all care and diligence unto him who can *search the hearts*

heart to the uttermoſt, and knows how to prevent all its treacheries and deceits. In the things before mentioned lies our *duty*, but here lies our *ſafety*. There is no treacherous corner in our hearts, but he can ſearch it to the uttermoſt; there's no deceit in them but he can diſappoint it. This courſe *David* takes, *Pſal.* 139. after he had ſet forth the *Omnipreſence* of God, and his *Omniſcience*, *verſ.* 8, 9, 10. he makes improvement of it, *verſe* 23. *Search me, O Lord, and try me.* As if he had ſaid, It is but a little that I know of my deceitful heart, only I would be *ſincere*, I would not have reſerves for ſin retained therein; wherefore do thou, who art preſent with my heart, who knoweſt my thoughts long before, undertake this work, perform it throughly, for thou alone art able ſo to do.

There are yet other arguments for the evidencing of the power and ſtrength of *Indwelling-ſin* from whence it is termed a *Law*, which we muſt paſs through according to the order wherein before we laid them down.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

Indwelling-Sin Enmity againſt God. Thence its power. Admits of no peace nor reſt: Is againſt God himſelf, Acts it ſelf in averſation from God; and propenſity to Evil. Is Univerſal. To all of God. In all of the ſoul. Conſtant.

WE have ſeen the *ſeat* and *ſubject* of this Law of Sin. In the next place we might take a view of its *nature* in general, which alſo will manifeſt its power and efficacy. But this I ſhall not enlarge upon; it being not my buſineſs to declare the *nature* of Indwelling-Sin, it hath alſo been done by others. I ſhall therefore only in reference unto our ſpecial deſign in hand, conſider *one property* of it, that belongs unto its nature: And this alwayes where ever it is. And this is that which is expreſſed by the Apoſtle, Rom. 8. 7. *The carnal mind is enmity againſt God*; that which is here called, φρόνημα τ σαρκὸς, *the wiſdom of the fleſh*, is the ſame with the *Law of Sin*, which we inſiſt on. And what ſayes he hereof? Why it is ἔχθρα εἰς τ θεὸν, *enmity againſt God* It is not only an *Enemy*, for ſo poſſibly ſome *Reconciliation* of it unto God might be made, but it is *Enmity* it ſelf, and ſo not capable of accepting any terms of peace. *Enemies* may be reconciled, but enmity cannot. Yea, the only way to reconcile *Enemies*, is to deſtroy the *enmity*. So the Apoſtle in another caſe

caſe tells us, *Rom.* 5. 10. *We who were Enemies, are reconciled unto God*; that is, a work compaſſed and brought about by the blood of Chriſt; the reconciling of the greateſt enemies. But when he comes to ſpeak of *enmity*, there is no way for it, but it muſt be *aboliſhed* and deſtroyed, Eph. 2. 15. *Having aboliſhed in his fleſh the enmity*: There is no way to deal with any *enmity* whatever, but by its abolition or deſtruction.

And this alſo lyes in it as it is *enmity*, that every part and parcel of it, if we may ſo ſpeak, the leaſt degree of it that can poſſibly remain in any one, whileſt, and where there is any thing of its nature, is *enmity* ſtill. It may not be ſo effectual and powerful in operation, as where it hath more life and vigour, but it is enmity ſtill. As every drop of poyſon, is poyſon, and will infect, and every ſpark of fire, is fire, and will burn; ſo is every thing of the Law of Sin, the laſt, the leaſt of it, it is enmity, it will poyſon, it will burn. That which is any thing in the *abſtract* is ſtill ſo; whilſt it hath any being at all. Our *Apoſtle* who may well be ſuppoſed to have made as great a progreſs in the ſubduing of it, as any one on the earth, yet after all cryes out for deliverance, as from an *irreconcileable Enemy*, *Rom.* 7. 24. The meaneſt acting, the meaneſt and moſt imperceptible working of it, is the acting and working of enmity. Mortification abates of its *force*, but doth not change its *nature*. Grace changeth the nature of man, but nothing can change the nature of ſin. What ever effect be wrought upon it, there is no effect wrought in it, but that it is *enmity* ſtill, ſin ſtill. This then by it is

our aſtate and condition. *God is love*, 1 *John*. 4. 8. He is ſo in *himſelf*, eternally excellent and deſirable above all. He is ſo *to us*, he is ſo in the blood of his Son, and in all the inexpreſſible fruits of it, by which we are what we are, and wherein all our future hopes and expectations are wrapped up. Againſt *this God* we carry about us an *enmity*, all our dayes. An enmity that hath this from its nature, that it is incapable of cure or reconciliation. Deſtroyed it may be, it ſhall be, but cured it cannot be. If a man hath an Enemy to deal withal that is too mighty for him, as *David* had with *Saul*, he may take the courſe that he did; conſider what it is that provoked his Enemy againſt him, & ſo addreſs himſelf to remove the cauſe and make up his peace, 1 Sam. 26. 19. *If the Lord have ſtirred thee up againſt me, let him accept an Offering, but if they be the Children of men, curſed be they of the Lord*; come it from God or man, there is yet hopes of peace. But when a man hath *enmity* it ſelf to deal withal, nothing is to be expected but continual fighting to the deſtruction of the one party. If it be not overcome and deſtroyed, it will overcome and deſtroy the ſoul.

And herein lyes no ſmall part of its *power* which we are enquiring after; it can admit of no terms of peace, of no compoſition. There may be a compoſition, where there is no Reconciliation. There may be a *truce* where there is no *peace*. But with this Enemy we can obtain neither the one, nor the other. It is never quiet conquering, nor conquered, which was the only kind of Enemy that the famous Warriour complained of, of old. It

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is in vain for a man to have any expectation of reſt from his *luſt*, but by its death, of *abſolute freedom*, but by his own. Some in the tumultuating of their corruptions, ſeek for quietneſs by labouring to ſatisfie them, *making proviſion for the fleſh to fulfill the luſts thereof*; as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, *Rom.* 13. 14. This is to aſſake Fire by Wood and Oyle. As all the fuel in the world, all the fabrick of the creation that is combuſtible, being caſt into the fire, will not at all ſatisfie it, but increaſe it; ſo is it with ſatisfaction given to ſin by ſinning, it doth but inflame and increaſe. If a man will part with ſome of his goods unto an enemy, it may ſatisfie him; but enmity will have all, and is not one whit the more ſatisfied, than if he had received nothing at all. Like the *lean Cattle* that were never the leſs hungry, for having devoured the fat. You cannot bargain with the fire to take but ſo much of your houſes, ye have no way but to quench it. It is in this caſe, as it is in the conteſt between a wiſe Man and a Fool, Prov. 29. 9. *Whether he rage or laugh, there is no reſt.* What ever frame or temper he be in, his importunate folly makes him troubleſome. It is ſo with this Indwelling-Sin, whether it rage or laugh, whether it violently tumultuate, as it will do on provocations and temptations; it will be outragious in the ſoul, or whether it ſeem to be pleaſed and contented, to be ſatisfied, all is one, there is no peace, no reſt to be had with it, or by it. Had it then been of any other nature, ſome other way might have been fixed on, but being it conſiſts in *enmity*, all the relief the ſoul hath muſt lye in its ruine.

Secondly,

Secondly, It is not only ſaid to be *enmity*, but it is ſaid to be *enmity againſt God*. It hath choſen a great enemy indeed. It is in ſundry places propoſed as *our Enemy*, 1 *Pet.* 2. 11. *Abſtain from fleſhly luſts, which warr againſt the ſoul.* They are enemies to the ſoul, that is, to our ſelves. Sometimes as an Enemy to the Spirit that is in us, *The fleſh luſteth or fighteth againſt the Spirit*, Gal. 5. 17. It fights againſt the Spirit, or the *Spiritual principle* that is in us, to conquer it; it fights againſt our ſouls to deſtroy them. It hath ſpecial ends and deſigns againſt our ſouls, and againſt the principle of Grace that is in us; but its proper formal object is God, it is enmity againſt God. It is its work to oppoſe Grace, it is a conſequent of its work to oppoſe our ſouls, which follows upon what it doth, more than what it intends; but its nature and formal deſign is to oppoſe God; God as the Law-giver, God as holy, God as the Author of the Goſpel, a way of ſalvation by Grace, and not by works, is the direct object of the Law of Sin. Why doth it oppoſe duty, *ſo that the good we would do, we do not*, either as to matter or manner? Why doth it render the ſoul carnal, indiſpoſed, unbelieving, unſpiritual, weary, wandring? It is becauſe of its enmity to God, whom the ſoul aims to have communion withal in duty. It hath as it were that command from Satan, which the *Aſſyrians* had from their King, *Fight neither with ſmall nor great, ſave only with the King of Iſrael*, 1 Kings 22. 31. It is neither great nor ſmall, but *God himſelf*, the King of *Iſrael*, that ſin ſets it ſelf againſt. There lyes the ſecret formal reaſon of all its oppoſition to *good*, even becauſe

becauſe it relates unto *God*. May a road, a trade, a way of duties be ſet up, where communion with God is not aimed at, but only the duty it ſelf, as is the manner of men in moſt of their ſuperſtitious Worſhip, the oppoſition that will lye againſt it from the Law of Sin will be very weak, eaſie and gentle. Or as the *Aſſyrians* becauſe of his ſhew of a King, aſſaulted *Jehoſaphat*, but when they found that it was not *Ahab*, they turned back from purſuing of him. Becauſe there is a ſhew and appearance of the Worſhip of God, ſin may make head againſt it at firſt, but when the duty cryes out in the heart, that indeed God is not there; Sin turns away to ſeek out its proper Enemy, even God himſelf elſewhere. And hence do many poor Creatures ſpend their dayes in diſmal tiring Superſtitions, without any great reluctancy from within, when others cannot be ſuffered freely to watch with Chriſt in a ſpiritual manner one hour. And it is no wonder that men fight with carnal weapons for their Superſtitious Worſhip *without*, when they have no fighting againſt it *within*. For God is not in it; and the Law of Sin makes not oppoſition to any duty, but to God in every duty. This is our ſtate and condition, all the oppoſition that ariſeth in us unto any thing that is ſpiritually good, whether it be from darkneſs in the mind, or averſation in the will, or ſloth in the Affections, all the ſecret arguings and reaſonings that are in the ſoul in purſuit of them, the direct object of them is God himſelf. The enmity lyes againſt *him*, which conſideration ſurely ſhould influence us to a perpetual conſtant watchfulneſs over our ſelves.

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It is thus alſo in reſpect of all propenſity unto ſin, as well as averſation from God. It is God himſelf that is aimed at. It is true, the pleaſures, the wages of ſin do greatly influence the ſenſual carnall affections of men; but it is the Holineſs and Authority of God, that ſin it ſelf riſes up againſt: It hates the yoke of the Lord; *Thou haſt been weary of me*, ſaith God to ſinners, and that during their performance of abundance of duties. Every act of ſin is a fruit of being *weary of God.* Thus *Job* tells us, what lyes at the bottom in the heart of ſinners; *they ſay to the Lord, depart from us*; it is enmity againſt him and averſation from him. Here lyes the formal nature of every ſin, it is an oppoſition to God, a caſting off his yoke, a breaking off the dependance which the Creature ought to have on the Creator. And the Apoſtle, *Rom.* 8. 7. gives the reaſon why he affirms *the carnal mind to be enmity againſt God*; namely, becauſe it is *not ſubject to the will of God, nor indeed can be.* It never is, nor will, nor *can* be ſubject to God, its whole nature conſiſting in an oppoſition to him. The ſoul wherein it is, may be ſubject to the Law of God, but this Law of Sin ſets up in contrariety unto it, and will not be in ſubjection.

To manifeſt a little farther the power of this Law of Sin from this property of its nature, that it is enmity againſt God; one or two inſeparable Adjuncts of it may be conſidered, which will farther evince it.

Firſt, It is *univerſal*; Some contentions are bounded unto ſome particular concernments, this is about one thing, that about another. It is not ſo here;

here; the enmity is abſolute and *univerſal*, as are all enmities that are grounded in the nature of the things themſelves. Such enmity is againſt the whole kind of that which is its object. Such is this enmity; for Firſt, It is *Univerſal* to all of God; and Secondly, It is *Univerſal* in all of the ſoul.

Firſt, It is *univerſal to all of God.* If there were any thing of God, his nature, properties, his mind or will, his Law or Goſpel, any duty of obedience to him, of communion with him, that ſin had not an enmity againſt, the ſoul might have a conſtant ſhelter and retreat within it ſelf, by applying it ſelf to that of God, to that of duty towards him, to that of communion with him, that ſin would make no oppoſition againſt. But the enmity lyes againſt God, and *all* of God, and every thing wherein or whereby we have to do with him. It is not ſubject to the Law, nor any part nor parcel, word or tittle of the Law. Whatever is oppoſite to any thing as ſuch, is oppoſite unto all of it. Sin is enmity to God as God, and therefore to all of God. Not his Goodneſs, not his Holineſs, not his Mercy, not his Grace, not his Promiſes: There is not any thing of him, which it doth not make head againſt; nor any duty, private, publick, in the heart, in external works, which it oppoſeth not. And the *nearer* (if I may ſo ſay) any thing is to God, the greater is its enmity unto it. The more of ſpirituality and holineſs is in any thing, the greater is its enmity. That which hath moſt of God, hath moſt of its oppoſition. Concerning them in whom this Law is predominant, God ſayes, *Ye have ſet at*

naught all my counſel, and you would have none of my reproof, *Prov.* 1.25. Not this or that part of Gods counſel, his mind or will is oppoſed, but *all his counſel*; whatever he calleth for, or guideth unto, in every particular of it, all is ſet at naught, and nothing of his reproof attended unto. A man would think it not very ſtrange that ſin ſhould maintain an enmity againſt God in his *Law*, which comes to judge it, to condemn it; but it raiſeth a greater enmity againſt him in his Goſpel, wherein he tenders mercy and pardon, as a deliverance from it, and that meerly becauſe more of the glorious properties of God nature, more of his excellencies and condeſcenſion, is manifeſted therein, than in the other.

Secondly, It is *univerſal in all of the ſoul*. Would this Law of Sin have contented it ſelf to have ſubdued any one *faculty* of the ſoul, would it have left any one at liberty, any one affection free from its yoke and bondage, it might poſſibly have been with more eaſe oppoſed, or ſubdued. But when Chriſt comes with his ſpiritual power upon the ſoul to conquer it to himſelf, he hath no quiet landing place. He can ſet foot on no ground but what he muſt fight for and conquer. Not the mind, not an Affection, not the will, but all is ſecured againſt him. And when Grace hath made its entrance; yet ſin will dwell *in all its coaſts*. Were any thing in the ſoul at perfect freedom and liberty, there a *ſtand* might be made to drive it from all the reſt of its holds: But it is *univerſal*, and wars in the whole ſoul. The mind hath its own darkneſs and vanity to wreſtle with; the will its own

own ſtubborneſs, obſtinacy and perverſneſs, every affection its own frowardneſs and averſation from God, and its ſenſuality to deal withal; ſo that one cannot yield relief unto one another, as they ought; they have as it were, their hands full at home. Hence it is that our *knowledge* is imperfect, our *obedience* weak, love not immixed, fear not pure, delight not free and noble. But I muſt not inſiſt on theſe particulars, or I could abundantly ſhew how diffuſed this principle of enmity againſt God is through the whole ſoul.

Secondly, Hereunto might be added its *conſtancy*. It is conſtant unto it ſelf, it wavers not, it hath no thoughts of yielding or giving over, notwithſtanding the powerful oppoſition that is made unto it both by the Law and Goſpel, as afterwards ſhall be ſhewed.

This then is a *third Evidence* of the power of ſin, taken from its nature and properties, wherein I have fixed but on *one inſtance* for its Illuſtration, namely, that it is *enmity againſt God*, and that univerſal and conſtant. Should we enter upon a full deſcription of it, it would require more ſpace and time than we have allotted to this whole ſubject. What hath been delivered might give us a little ſenſe of it, if it be the will of God, and ſtir us up unto watchfulneſs. What can be of a more ſad conſideration than that we ſhould carry about us conſtantly that which is enmity againſt God, and that not in this or that particular, but in all that he is, and in all wherein he hath revealed himſelf. I cannot ſay it is well with them who *find it not*.

it is well with them indeed in whom it is weakned, and the power of it abated. But yet for them who ſay it *is not in them, they do but deceive themſelves, and there is no truth in them.*

CHAP. V.

Nature of Sin farther diſcovered as it is enmity againſt God. Its averſation from all good, opened. Means to prevent the effects of it preſcribed.

WE have conſidered ſomewhat of the nature of *Indwelling-ſin*, not *abſolutely*, but in reference unto the diſcovery of its power. But this more cleary evidenceth it ſelf in its *actings* and *operations*. Power is an act of life, and operation is the only diſcoverer of life. We know not that any thing lives, but by the effects and works of life. And great and ſtrong operations diſcover a powerful and vigorous life. Such are the operations of this *Law of ſin*, which are all demonſtrations of its power.

That which we have declared concerning its nature, is that it conſiſts in *enmity*. Now there are two general heads of the working or operation of *enmity*. Firſt, *Averſation*. Secondly, *Oppoſition*.

Firſt, *Averſation*. Our Saviour deſcribing the *enmity* that was between himſelf and the Theachers of the Jews, by the effects of it, ſaith in the Prophet, *My ſoul loathed them, and their ſoul alſo abhorred*

horred me, *Zach.* 7. 8. Where there is mutual enmity, there is mutual *averſation*, loathing, and abomination. So it was between the Jews and the Samaritans, they were enemies, and abhorred one another; as *Joh.* 4. 9.

Secondly, *Oppoſition*, or contending againſt one another, is the next product of *enmity*, *Iſa.* 63. 10. *He was turned to be their enemy, and he fought againſt them*; ſpeaking of God towards the people. Where there is *enmity*, there will be *fighting*, it is the proper and natural product of it. Now both theſe *effects* are found in this *Law of ſin.*

Firſt, For *Averſation*, there is an averſation in it unto God, and every thing of God, as we have in part diſcovered in handling the *enmity* it ſelf, and ſo ſhall not need much to inſiſt upon it again. All *indiſpoſition* unto *duty*, wherein communion with God is to be obtained, all *wearineſs* of duty, all carnality or *formality* under duty, it all ſprings from this root. The wiſe man cautions us againſt this evil, *Eccleſ.* 5. 1. *When thou goeſt to the houſe of God, keep thy foot.* Haſt thou any ſpiritual duty to perform, and doſt thou deſign the attaining of any communion with God? look to thy ſelf, take care of thy *affections*, they will be gadding and wandring, and that from their *averſation* to what thou haſt in hand. There is not any good that we would do, wherein we may not find this *averſation* exerciſing it ſelf. *When I would do good, evil is preſent with me*; at any time, at all times, when I would do any thing that is ſpiritually good, it is preſent; that is, to *hinder me*, to obſtruct me in my duty, becauſe it abhors and loaths the thing

which I have in hand, it will keep me off from it if it be poſſible. In them in whom it prevails, it comes at length unto that frame which is expreſſed, *Ezech.* 33. 31. It will allow an outward *bodily preſence* unto the worſhip of God, wherein it is not concerned, but it keeps the heart quite away.

It may be ſome will pretend, they find it not ſo in *themſelves*, but they have *freedom* and *liberty* in and unto all the duties of obedience that they attend unto. But I fear, this *pretended liberty* will be found upon examination to ariſe from one or both of theſe cauſes. Firſt, *Ignorance* of the true ſtate and condition of their own ſouls, of their inward man and its actings towards God. They know not how it is with them, and therefore are not to be believed in what they report. They are in the *dark*, and neither know what they do, nor whither they are going. It is like the *Phariſee* knew little of this matter, which made him *boaſt* of his duties to God himſelf. Or, ſecondly, It may be what ever duties of worſhip or obedience ſuch perſons perform, they may through want of faith, and an intereſt in Chriſt, have no communion with God in them. And if ſo, *ſin* will make but little oppoſition unto them therein. We ſpeak of *them* whoſe hearts are exerciſed with theſe things, and if under their complaints of them, and groanings for deliverance from them, others cry out unto them, *Stand off, we are holier than ye*, they are willing to bear their condition, as knowing that their way may be ſafe, though it be troubleſome, and being willing to ſee their own dangers, that they may avoid the ruine which others fall into.

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Let us then a little conſider this *averſation* in ſuch acts of obedience, as wherein there is no concernment but that of God and the ſoul. In publick duties there may be a mixture of other conſiderations; they may be ſo influenced by cuſtom and neceſſity, that a right judgment cannot from them be made of this matter. But let us take into conſideration the duties of *retirement*, as *private Prayer* and *Meditation*, and the like; or elſe extraordinary duties, or duties to be performed in an extraordinary manner.

Firſt, In theſe will this *averſation* and loathing oftentimes diſcover it ſelf in the *affections*. A ſecret ſtriving will be in them about cloſe and cordial dealing with God. Unleſs the hand of God in his Spirit be high and ſtrong upon the ſoul, even when convictions, ſenſe of duty, dear and real eſteem of God, and communion with him, have carried the ſoul into its cloſet, yet if there be not the vigour and power of a *ſpiritual life* conſtantly at work, there will be a ſecret lothneſs in them unto duty; yea, ſometimes there will be a violent inclination to the contrary; ſo that the ſoul had rather do any thing, embrace any *diverſion*, though it wound it ſelf thereby, than vigorouſly apply it ſelf unto that which in the inward man it breaths after. It is *weary* before it begins, and ſays, when will the work be over? Here God and the ſoul are immediately concerned, and it is a great conqueſt to *do what we would*, though we come exceedingly ſhort of what *we ſhould* do. Secondly, It diſcovers it ſelf in the *mind* alſo: when we addreſs our ſelves to God in Chriſt, we

are, as *Job* ſpeaks, *to fill our mouths with arguments*, *Job* 23. 4. that we may be able to *plead* with him, as he calls upon us to do, *Iſa.* 43. 26. *Put me in remembrance, let us plead together.* Whence the Church is called upon to take unto it ſelf *words* or arguments in going to God, *Hoſ.* 14. 2. The ſum is, that the *Mind* ſhould be furniſhed with the conſiderations that are prevailing with God, and be in readineſs to *plead* them, and to manage them in the moſt ſpiritual manner to the beſt advantage. Now is there no difficulty to get the *mind* into ſuch a frame, as to lay out it ſelf to the utmoſt in this work? to be clear, ſteady, and conſtant in its duty? To draw out, and make uſe of its ſtores and furniture of promiſes and experiences? It *ſtarts*, wanders, *flags* all from this ſecret *averſation* unto communion with God, which proceeds from the *Law of Indwelling-ſin.* Some complain that they can make no work of *Meditation*, they cannot bend their minds unto it. I confeſs there may be a great cauſe of this, in their want of a right underſtanding of the duty it ſelf, and of the ways of manageing the ſoul in it, which therefore I ſhall a little ſpeak to afterwards. But yet this *ſecret enmity* hath its hand in the loſs they are at alſo, and that both in their minds and in their affections. Others are forced to live in *family* and *publick* duties, they find ſuch little benefit and ſucceſs in *private.* And here hath been the beginning of the *Apoſtaſie* of many Profeſſors, and the ſource of many fooliſh ſenſual opinions. Finding this *averſation* in their minds and affections from cloſeneſs and conſtancy in private ſpiritual duties, not knowing how to

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conquer and prevail againſt theſe difficulties through *him who enables us*, they have at firſt been ſubdued to a neglect of them, firſt *partial*, then *total*, until having loſt all conſcience of them, they have had a door opened unto all ſin and licentiouſneſs, and ſo to a full and utter *Apoſtaſie*. I am perſwaded there are very few that *apoſtatize* from a profeſſion of any continuance, ſuch as our days abound withall, but their door of entrance into the folly of back-ſliding, was either ſome *great and notorious ſin* that bloodied their conſciences, tainted their affections, and intercepted all delight of having any thing more to do with God; or elſe it was a courſe of *neglect in private duties*, ariſing from a wearineſs of contending againſt that powerful *averſation* which they found in themſelves unto them. And this alſo through the craft of Satan hath been improved into many fooliſh and ſenſual opinions, of *living unto God without, and above any duties of communion*. And we find, that after men have for a while choaked and blinded their conſciences with this pretence, curſed wickedneſs or ſenſuality hath been the end of their folly. And the reaſon of all this is, that the giving way to the *Law of ſin* in the leaſt, is the giving ſtrength unto it: To let it alone is to let it *grow*, not to conquer it is to be conquered by it.

As it is in reſpect of *private*, ſo it is alſo in reſpect of *publick* duties, that have any thing *extraordinary* in them. What ſtrivings, ſtruglings, and pleadings are there in the heart about them, eſpecially againſt the ſpirituality of them? Yea, in and under them, will not the mind and affections

ſometimes

ſometimes be intangled with things *uncouth*, new and ſtrange unto them, ſuch as at the time of the leaſt ſerious buſineſs, a man would not deign to take into his thoughts. But if the leaſt looſe, liberty or advantage be given unto *Indwelling-ſin*, if it be not perpetually watched over, it will work to a ſtrange and an unexpected iſſue. In brief, let the ſoul uncloath any duty what ever, *private* or *publick*, any thing that is called *Good*, let a man diveſt it of all outward reſpects which ſecretly inſinuate themſelves into the mind, and give it ſome *complacency* in what it is about, but do not render it acceptable unto God, and he ſhall aſſuredly find ſomewhat of the power, and ſome of the effects of this averſation. It begins in lothneſs and indiſpoſition, goes on with intangling the mind and affections with other things, and will end, if not prevented, in *wearineſs* of God, which he complains of in his people, *Iſa.* 43. 22. They ceaſed from duty becauſe they were weary of God.

But this inſtance being of great importance unto Profeſſors in their walking with God, we muſt not paſs it over without ſome intimations of directions for them in their contending againſt it, and oppoſition to it. Only this muſt be premiſed, that I am not giving directions for the mortifying of *Indwelling-ſin* in general, which is to be done alone by the Spirit of Chriſt, by vertue of our union with him, *Rom.* 8. 13. but only of our *particular duty*, with reference unto this eſpecial evil or effect of *Indwelling-ſin* that we have a little inſiſted on, or what in this *ſingle caſe* the wiſdom of faith ſeems to direct unto, and call for; which will be our way

way and courſe in our proceſs upon the conſideration of other effects of it.

Firſt, The great means to prevent the fruits and effects of this *averſation*, is the conſtant keeping of the ſoul in an univerſally holy frame. As this weakens the whole *Law of ſin*, ſo anſwerably all its properties; and particulary this *averſation*. It is this *frame* only that will enable us to ſay with the *Pſalmiſt*, *Pſal.* 57. 7. *My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed.* It is utterly impoſſible to keep the heart in a prevailing holy frame in *any one duty*, unleſs it be ſo in and unto *all and every one*. If ſin intanglements get hold in any *one thing*, they will put themſelves upon the ſoul in *every thing*. A conſtant even frame and temper in all duties, in *all ways*, is the only preſervative for any *one* way. Let not him who is neglective in *publick* perſwade himſelf, that all will be clear and eaſie in *private* or on the contrary. There is an *harmony* in obedience, break but one part and you interrupt the whole. Our wounds in particular ariſe generally from negligence as to the whole courſe. So *David* informs us, *Pſal.* 119. 6. *Then ſhall I not be aſhamed, when I have a reſpect unto all thy commandements.* An univerſal reſpect to all Gods commandements, is the only preſervative from *ſhame*. And nothing have we more reaſon to be aſhamed of, than the ſhameful miſcarriages of our hearts in point of duty, which are from the principle before mentioned.

Secondly, Labour to prevent the very *beginnings* of the workings of this averſation; let grace be before-hand with it in every duty. We are directed, 1 *Pet.* 4. 7. to *watch unto prayer*; and as is

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is unto prayer, ſo unto every duty; that is, to conſider and take care that we be not hindered from within, nor from without, as to a due performance of it. *Watch* againſt temptations to oppoſe them, watch againſt the Averſation that is in ſin to prevent it. As we are not to *give place to Satan*, no more are we to ſin. If it be not prevented in its firſt attempts, it will prevail. My meaning is, whatever *Good*, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, we have to do, and *find evil preſent with us*, as we ſhall find it preſent, prevent its parlying with the ſoul, its inſinuating of poiſon into the mind and Affections, by a vigorous, holy, violent ſtirring up of the grace, or graces that are to be acted and ſet at work peculiary in that duty. Let *Jacob* come firſt into the world, or if prevented by the violence of *Eſau* let him lay hold on his heel to overthrow him, and obtain the birth-right. Upon the very firſt motion of *Peter* to our Saviour, crying, *Maſter, ſpare thy ſelf*, he immediately replyes, *get thee behind me Satan.* So ought we to ſay, get thee gone thou *Law of Sin*, thou preſent evil, and it may be of the ſame uſe unto us. Get grace then, up betimes unto Duty, and be early in the rebukes of ſin.

Thirdly, Though it do its worſt, yet be ſure it never prevail to a *conqueſt*. Be ſure you be not *wearied* out by its pertinacy, nor driven from your hold by its importunity; Do not faint by its oppoſition. Take the Apoſtles advice Heb. 6. 11. *We deſire that every one of you, do ſhew the ſame diligence to the full aſſurance of hope unto the end that ye be not ſlothful.* Still hold out in the ſame diligence.

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There are many wayes whereby men are driven from a conſtant holy performance of duties, all of them dangerous, if not pernicious to the ſoul. Some are diverted by *buſineſs*, ſome by company, ſome by the power of temptations, ſome diſcouraged by their own darkneſs; but none ſo *dangerous* as this, when the ſoul gives over in *part*, or in *whole*, as wearied by the Averſation of ſin unto it, or to *communion* with God in it. This argues the ſouls giving up of it ſelf unto the power of ſin, which unleſs the Lord break the ſnare of Satan therein, will aſſuredly prove ruinous. Our Saviours inſtruction is, that we ought *alwayes to pray, and not to faint*, Luke 18. 1. Oppoſition will ariſe, none ſo bitter and keen as that from our own hearts; if we faint we periſh. *Take heed leſt you be wearied*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *and faint in your minds*, Heb. 12. 3. Such a *fainting* as is attended with a *wearineſs* and that with a giving place to the Averſation working in our hearts, is to be avoided, if we would not periſh. The caution is the ſame with that of the ſame Apoſtle, Rom. 12. 12. *Rejoycing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing inſtant in prayer.* And in general with that of Chap. 6. 12. *Let not ſin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye ſhould obey it in the luſt thereof.* To ceaſe from duty, in part, or in whole, upon the Averſation of ſin unto its ſpirituality, is to give ſin the Rule, and to obey it in the luſt thereof. Yield not then unto it, but hold out the conflict; wait on God and ye ſhall prevail, Iſa. 40. 31. *They that wait upon the Lord ſhall renew their ſtrength, they ſhall mount up with wings as Eagles; they ſhall run and not be weary,*

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and they ſhall walk and not faint. But that which is now ſo difficult, will increaſe in difficulty if we give way unto it. But if we abide in our ſtation, we ſhall prevail, the mouth of the Lord hath ſpoken it.

Fourthly, Carry about a conſtant *humbling ſenſe* of this cloſe *averſation* unto ſpiritualneſs that yet lyes in our nature. If men find the efficacy of it, what *ſhould*, what conſideration *can* be more powerful to bring them unto humble walking with God. That after all the diſcoveries that God hath made of himſelf unto them, all the Kindneſs they have received from him, his doing of them good and not evil in all things, there ſhould yet be ſuch an heart of unkindneſs and unbelief, ſtill abiding, as to have an *Averſation* lying in it to Communion with Him: How ought the thoughts of it to caſt us into the duſt, to fill us with ſhame and ſelf-abhorrency all our days? What have we found in God in any of our approaches or addreſſes unto him, that it ſhould be thus with us? What iniquity have we found in him? *Hath he been a Wilderneſs unto us, or a Land of Darkneſs?* Did we ever loſe any thing by drawing nigh unto him? Nay, hath not therein lyen all the reſt and peace which we have obtained? Is not he the Fountain and Spring of all our mercies, of all our deſirable things? Hath he not bid us welcome at our coming? Have we not received from him more than heart can conceive, or tongue expreſs? What ails then our fooliſh and wretched hearts, to harbour ſuch a curſed ſecret diſlike of him and his ways? Let us be aſhamed and aſtoniſhed at the conſideration of it, and walk in

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in humbling ſenſe of it all our dayes. Let us carry it about with us in the moſt ſecret of our thoughts. And as this is a *Duty* in it ſelf acceptable unto God, who delights to dwell with them that are of an *humble and contrite ſpirit*; ſo it is of exceeding efficacy to the weakening of the evil we treat of.

Fifthly, Labour to poſſeſs the mind with the beauty and excellency of ſpiritual things, that ſo they may be preſented *lovely* and deſirable to the ſoul, and this curſed *averſation* of ſin will be weakned thereby. It is an innate acknowledged principle, that the ſoul of man will not keep up chearfully unto the *Worſhip of God*, unleſs it have a diſcovery of a *beauty* and comelineſs in it. Hence when men had loſt all ſpiritual ſenſe and ſavour of the things of God, to ſupply the want that was in their own ſouls, they invented outwardly pompous and gorgeous wayes of worſhip, in *Images*, *Paintings*, *Pictures*, and I know not what carnal ornaments which they have called the *beauties of holineſs*. Thus much however was diſcovered therein, that the mind of man muſt ſee a *beauty*, a deſirableneſs in the things of Gods Worſhip, or it will not delight in it, *averſation* will prevail. Let then the ſoul labour to acquaint it ſelf with the *ſpiritual beauty* of obedience, of Communion with God, and of all Duties of immediate approach to him, that it may be filled with *delight* in them. It is not my preſent work to diſcover the heads and ſprings of that *beauty* and deſirableneſs which is in ſpiritual duties, in their relation to *God*, the eternal ſpring of all beauty, to *Chriſt*, the Love, deſire, and hope

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of all Nations, to the *Spirit* the great Beautifier of ſouls, rendering them by his grace all glorious within, in their ſuitableneſs to the ſouls of Men, as to their actings towards their laſt end, in the rectitude and holineſs of the *Rule* in attendance whereunto they are to be performed; But I only ſay at preſent in general, that to acquaint the ſoul throughly with theſe things is an eminent way of weakening the *Averſation* ſpoken of.

CHAP. VI.

The Work of this Enmity againſt God, by way of Oppoſition. Firſt, It luſteth. Wherein the luſting of Sin conſiſteth. It ſurprizing of the ſoul. Readineſs to cloſe with Temptations. Its fighting and warring. (1.) *In Rebellion againſt the Law of Grace.* (2.) *In Aſſaulting the ſoul.*

HOw this enmity worketh by way of *Averſation* hath been declared, as alſo the means that the ſoul is to uſe for the preventing of its effects and prevalency. The ſecond way whereby it exerts its ſelf is *Oppoſition*. Enmity will *oppoſe* and contend with that wherewith it is at enmity. It is ſo in things natural and moral. As light and darkneſs, heat and cold, ſo vertue and vice oppoſe each other. So is it with ſin and Grace, ſaith the Apoſtle, theſe are contrary one to the other, Gal. 5. 17. ἀντίκειται ἀλλήλοις, they are *placed and ſet*

ſet in mutual oppoſition, and that continually and conſtantly, as we ſhall ſee.

Now there are two wayes whereby *Enemies* mannage an oppoſition. Firſt, By *force*: and Secondly, by *fraud* and deceit. So when the *Egyptians* became Enemies to the Children of *Iſrael*, and mannaged an enmity againſt them, *Exod.* 1. 10. *Pharaoh* ſaith, *Let us deal wiſely*, or rather cunningly and ſubtilly with this People; for ſo *Stephen* with reſpect to this word, expreſſeth it, *Acts* 7. 19. by κατασοφισάμενος; He uſed *all manner of fraudulent Sophiſtry*. And unto this deceit they added *force*, in their grievous oppreſſions. This is the way and manner of things where there is a prevailing *enmity*. And both theſe are made uſe of by the *Law of Sin* in its enmity againſt God, and our ſouls.

I ſhall begin with the Firſt; or its actings *as it were in a way of force*, in an open down-right oppoſition to God and his Law, or the *Good* that a Believing ſoul would do in obedience unto God, and his Law. And in this whole matter, we muſt be careful to ſtear our courſe aright, taking the *Scripture* for our Guide, with Spiritual Reaſon and Experience for our Companions. For there are many Shelves in our courſe, which muſt diligently be avoided, that none who conſider theſe things be *troubled* without cauſe, or *comforted* without a juſt foundation.

In this *Firſt way*, whereby this ſin exerts its *enmity* in oppoſition, namely, *as it were by force* or ſtrength, there are four things expreſſing ſo many diſtinct degrees in its progreſs and procedure in the purſuit of its enmity.

First, Its general Inclination, it *lusteth*, *Gal.* 5. 17.

Secondly, Its particular way of contending, it *fights or wars*, *Rom.* 7. 23. *James* 4. 1. 1 *Pet.* 2. 11.

Thirdly, Its success in this contest, *it brings the soul into Captivity to the Law of Sin*, *Rom.* 7. 23.

Fourthly, Its growth and rage upon success, it comes up to *madness*, as an enraged Enemy will do, *Eccles.* 9. 3. All which we must speak to in order.

First, In general it is said to *Lust*, *Gal.* 5. 17. *The flesh lusteth against the Spirit.* This word expresseth the general nature of that opposition which the *Law of Sin* maketh against God, and the Rule of his Spirit or Grace in them that believe, and therefore the least degree of that opposition is expressed hereby. When it doth any thing it *lusteth.* As because *burning* is the general acting of fire, what ever it doth else, it doth also *burn.* When fire doth any thing, it burns: And when the Law of Sin doth any thing, it *lusts.*

Hence all the actings of this Law of Sin are called the *lusts of the flesh*, Gal. 5. 16. *Ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh*, Rom. 13. 14. *Make no provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof.* Nor are these *lusts of the flesh* those only whereby men act their *sensuality* in riot, drunkenness, uncleaness, and the like, but they comprehend all the *actings* of the Law of Sin whatever in all the faculties and Affections of the soul. Thus *Ephes.* 2. 3. We have mention of the *desires*, or *wills*, or *lusts* of the mind, as well as of the flesh. The *mind* the most spiritual part of the soul hath its *lusts*, no less than the *sensual appetite*, which seems sometimes more properly

perly to be called the fleſh. And in the products of theſe luſts, there are defilements of the *Spirit*, as well as of the *fleſh*, 2 *Cor.* 7. 1. that is, of the *mind* and *underſtanding*, as well as of the Appetite and Affections, and the body that attends their ſervice. And in the *blameleſneſs* of all theſe conſiſts our holineſs, 2 Theſſ. 5. 23. *The God of peace, ſanctifie you wholly, and I pray God your whole Spirit, and ſoul, and body be preſerved blameleſs unto the coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* Yea, by the fleſh in this matter the whole Old man, or the Law of Sin is *intended*, John 3. 6. *That which is born of the fleſh is fleſh*; that is, it is all ſo, and nothing elſe. And what ever remains of the *old* nature in the *new man* is fleſh ſtill. And *this fleſh luſteth*; this Law of Sin doth ſo, which is the general bottom and foundation of all its oppoſition unto God. And this it doth two wayes.

First, In an hidden cloſe *propenſity* unto all evil. This lyes in it *habitually*. Whileſt a man is in the ſtate of nature, fully under the power and dominion of this *Law of Sin*, it is ſaid, that *every figment of his heart is evil*, and that continually, *Gen.* 6. 5. It can frame, faſhion, produce, or act nothing but what is evil: becauſe this *habitual propenſity* unto evil, that is in the Law of Sin, is abſolutely predominant in ſuch a one. It is in the heart like *poiſon* that hath nothing to allay its venemous qualities, and ſo infects whatever it touches. And where the power and dominion of it is broken, yet in its own nature it hath ſtill an *habitual propenſity* unto that which is evil, wherein its *luſting* doth conſiſt.

But here we muſt diſtinguiſh between the *habi-*

tual frame of the heart, and the natural propenſity or habitual inclination of the Law of Sin in the heart. The *habitual inclination of the heart* is denominated from the principle that bears Chief or Soveraign Rule in it; and therefore in Believers it is unto *Good*, unto God, unto holineſs, unto obedience. The heart is not *habitually* inclined unto evil by the remainders of Indwelling Sin, but this *Sin in the heart* hath a conſtant *habitual propenſity* unto evil in its ſelf, or its own nature. This the Apoſtle intends by its *being preſent with us*; it is preſent with me, that is, alwayes, and for its own end, which is to *luſt* unto ſin.

It is with Indwelling-Sin as with a *River*; whileſt the Springs and Fountains of it are open, and waters are continually ſupplyed unto its ſtreams, ſet a damm before it, and it cauſeth it to riſe and ſwell, untill it bear down all, or overflow the banks about it. Let theſe waters be *abated*, dryed up in ſome good meaſure, in the ſprings of them, and the remainder may be coerced and reſtrained. But ſtill as long as there is any *running water* it will conſtantly preſs upon what ſtands before it, according to its weight and ſtrength, becauſe it is its nature ſo to do. And if by any means it make a paſſage, it will proceed. So is it with *Indwelling-Sin*: whileſt the ſprings and fountains of it are open, in vain is it for men to ſet a *damm* before it by their convictions, reſolutions, vowes and promiſes. They may check it for a while, but it will increaſe, riſe high, and rage at one time or another, until it bears down all thoſe convictions and reſolutions, or makes it ſelf an *under-*

ground-

ground-paſſage by ſome ſecret luſt that ſhall give a full vent unto it. But now ſuppoſe that the ſprings of it are much *dryed* up by Regenerating Grace, the ſtreams or actings of it abated by Holineſs, yet whileſt any thing remains of it, it will be preſſing conſtantly to have vent, to preſs forward into actual ſin. And this is its *inſting*.

And this *habitual propenſity* in it is diſcovered two wayes.

Firſt, In its *unexpected ſurprizals* of the ſoul into fooliſh ſinful figments and imaginations which it looked not for, nor was any occaſion adminiſtred unto them. It is with Indwelling-Sin, as it is with the contrary principle of ſanctifying Grace. This gives the ſoul, if I may ſo ſay, many a *bleſſed ſurprizal*. It oftentimes ingenerates and brings forth an holy ſpiritual frame in the heart and mind, when we have had no previous rational conſiderations to work them thereunto. And this manifeſts it to be an *habitual principle* prevailing in the mind: So *Cant.* 6. 12. *Or ever I was aware my ſoul made me as the Chariots of Aminadab*; that is, free, willing and ready for communion with Chriſt. לא ידעתי *I knew not*; it was done by the power of the Spirit of Grace, ſo that I took no notice of it, as it were, until it was done. The frequent actings of Grace in this manner, exciting acts of faith, love and complacency in God, are Evidences of much ſtrength and prevalency of it in the ſoul. And thus alſo is it with *Indwelling-Sin*; ere the *ſoul is aware*, without any provocation or temptation, when it knows not, it is caſt into a vain and fooliſh frame. Sin produceth its

figments secretly in the heart, and prevents the minds consideration of what it is about. I mean hereby those *Actus primo primi*, first acts of the soul, which are thus far *involuntary*, as that they have not the *actual consent* of the Will unto them; but are *voluntary* as far as sin hath its residence in the Will. And these *surprizals*, if the soul be not awake to take speedy care for the prevention of their tendency, do oftentimes set all as it were on fire, and engage the mind and affections into actual sin. For as by Grace we are oftentimes ere we are aware made as the *Chariots of a willing people*, and are far engaged in heavenly-mindedness and communion with Christ, making speed in it as in a *Chariot*; so by sin are we oftentimes, ere we are aware, carried into distempered affections, foolish imaginations, and pleasing delightfulness in things that are not good nor profitable. Hence is that caution of the Apostle, *Gal.* 6. 1. ἐὰν προλημφθῇ, If a man be *surprized* at unawares with a fault or in a transgression. I doubt not but the subtilty of Satan, and the power of temptation, are there taken into consideration by the Apostle, which causeth him to express a mans falling into sin, by ἐὰν προλημφθῇ, if *he be surprized*; So this working of *Indwelling-Sin* also hath its consideration in it, and that in the *chiefest place* without which nothing else could *surprize* us. For without the help thereof, whatever comes from without, from Satan, or the world, must admit of some *parley* in the mind before it be received, but it is from within, from our selves that we are *surprized*. Hereby are we disappointed and wrought over to do that which we would

would not, and hindered from the doing of that which we would.

Hence it is, that when the ſoul is oftentimes doing as it were quite another thing, engaged quite upon another deſign, ſin ſtarts that in the heart or imaginations of it, that carryes it away into that which is evil and ſinful. Yea, to manifeſt its power, ſometimes when the ſoul is ſeriouſly engaged in the *mortification* of any ſin, it will by one means or other lead it away into a *dalliance* with that very ſin whoſe ruine it is ſeeking, and whoſe mortification it is engaged in. But as there is in this operation of the *Law of Sin*, a ſpecial *enticing* or *entangling*, we ſhall ſpeak unto it fully afterwards. Now theſe *ſurprizals* can be from nothing but an *habitual propenſity* unto evil in the principle from whence they proceed. Not an habitual inclination unto actual ſin in the mind or heart, but an habitual propenſity unto evil in the ſin that is in the mind or heart. This prevents the ſoul with its figments. How much communion with God is hereby prevented, how many Meditations are diſturbed, how much the minds and Conſciences of Men have been defiled by this acting of ſin, ſome may have obſerved. I know no greater burthen in the life of a Believer than theſe *involuntary ſurprizals* of ſoul; involuntary I ſay, as to the actual conſent of the Will, but not ſo in reſpect of that corruption which is in the Will, and is the Principle of them. And it is in reſpect unto theſe, that the Apoſtle makes his complaint, *Rom.* 7. 24.

Secondly, This *habitual inclination* manifeſts it

ſelf in its *readineſs and promptneſs*, without diſpute or altercation to joyn and cloſe with every temptation, whereby it may poſſibly be excited. As we know it is in the nature of fire to burn, becauſe it immediately lays hold on whatever is *combuſtible*. Let any temptation whatever be propoſed unto a man, the ſuitableneſs of whoſe *matter* unto his corruptions, or manner of its propoſal, makes it a temptation; immediately he hath not only to do with the temptation as outwardly propoſed, but alſo with his own heart about it. Without farther conſideration or debate, the temptation hath got a friend in him. Not a moments ſpace is given between the *propoſal*, and the neceſſity there is incumbent on the ſoul to look to its enemy within. And this alſo argues a conſtant *habitual propenſity* unto evil. Our Saviour ſaid of the aſſaults and temptations of Sathan, *The Prince of this world cometh, and he hath no part in me*, *Joh.* 14. 30. He had more temptations *intenſively* and *extenſively*, in number, quality and fierceneſs, from Sathan and the world, than ever had any of the ſons of men: But yet in all of them, he had to deal only with that which came from *without*. His holy heart had nothing to like them, ſuited to them, or ready to give them entertainment: *The Prince of this world had nothing in him.* So it was with *Adam*; when a temptation befell him, he had only the *outward* propoſal of it to look unto, all was well within, until the outward temptation took place and prevailed. With us it is not ſo.

In a *City* that is at unity in it ſelf, compact and entire, without diviſions and parties, if an enemy approach

approach about it, the Rulers and Inhabitants have no thoughts at all but only how they may oppoſe the enemy *without*, and reſiſt him in his approaches. But if the City be *divided* in it ſelf, if there be factions and *Traitors* within, the very firſt thing they do, is to look to the enemies at home, the Traitors within; to cut off the head of *Sheba*, if they will be ſafe. All was well with *Adam* within doors, when Satan came, ſo that he had nothing to do but to look to his aſſaults and approaches. But now on the acceſs of any temptation, the ſoul is inſtantly to look *in*, where it ſhall find this *Traitor* at work, cloſing with the baits of Sathan, and ſtealing away the heart. And this it doth always, which evinceth an *habitual inclination*. *Pſal.* 38. 17. ſaith *David*, I am ready to halt, or *for halting*; כי אני לצלע נכון, *I am prepared* and diſpoſed unto *hallucination*, to the ſlipping of my foot into ſin, *verſe* 16. as he expounds the meaning of that phraſe, *Pſal.* 73. 2, 3. There was from *Indwelling-ſin* a continual diſpoſition in him to be *ſlipping*, ſtumbling, halting on every occaſion or temptation. There is nothing ſo vain, fooliſh, ridiculous, fond, nothing ſo vile and abominable, nothing ſo *atheiſtical* or execrable, but if it be propoſed unto the ſoul in a way of temptation, there is that in this *Law of ſin* which is ready to anſwer it, before it be decried by grace. And this is the firſt thing in this *luſting* of the Law of ſin, it conſiſts in its *habitual propenſity* unto evil, manifeſting it ſelf by the *involuntary ſurpriſals* of the ſoul unto ſin, and its readineſs without diſpute or conſideration to joyn with all temptations whatſoever.

Secondly

Secondly, Its *luſting* conſiſts in its *actual* preſſing after that which is evil, and *actual* oppoſition unto that which is good. The former inſtances ſhewed its conſtant readineſs to this work, this now treats of the work it ſelf. It is not only *ready*, but for the moſt part always engaged. It *luſteth* ſaith the holy Ghoſt, it doth ſo continually. It *ſtirreth* in the ſoul by one act or other conſtantly, almoſt as the ſpirits in the blood, or the blood in the veins. This the Apoſtle calls its tempting, *Jam.* 1. 14. *Every man is tempted of his own luſt.* Now what is it to be tempted? It is to have that propoſed to a mans conſideration, which if he cloſe withall, it is evil, it is ſin unto him. This is ſins trade; ἐπιθυμεῖ, *it luſteth.* It is raiſing up in the heart, and propoſing unto the mind and affections, that which is evil, trying, as it were, whether the ſoul will cloſe with its ſuggeſtions, or how far it can carry them on, though it do not wholly prevail. Now when ſuch a temptation comes from *without*, it is unto the ſoul an *indifferent* thing, neither good nor evil unleſs it be conſented unto. But the very propoſal from *within*, it being the ſouls own act, is its ſin. And this is the work of the *Law of ſin*; it is reſtleſly and continually raiſing up, and propoſing innumerable various forms and appearances of evil, in this or that kind, indeed in every kind, that the nature of man is capable to exerciſe corruption in. Something or other, in matter, or manner, or circumſtance, inordinate, unſpiritual, unanſwerable unto the Rule, it hatcheth and propoſeth unto the ſoul. And this power of ſin to beget figments and idea's of actual evil in the

the heart the Apoſtle may have reſpect unto, 1 *Theſſ.* 5. 22. ἀπὸ παντὸς εἴδους πονηροῦ ἀπέχεσθε, Keep your ſelves from every evil figment or *idea* of ſin in the heart; for the word there uſed doth not any where ſignifie an *outward form or appearance*; neither is it the appearance of evil, but an *evil idea* or figment that is intended. And this *luſting of ſin* is that which the Prophet expreſſeth in wicked men, in whom the Law of it is predominant, *Iſa.* 57. 20. *The wicked are like the troubled ſea, when it cannot reſt, whoſe waters caſt up mire and dirt.* A ſimilitude moſt lively expreſſing the *luſtings* of the Law of ſin, reſtleſly and continually bubling up in the heart, with wicked, fooliſh and filthy imaginations and deſires. This then is the firſt thing in the oppoſition that this enmity makes to God, namely in its general inclination, it *luſteth.*

Secondly, There is its particular way of contending, it *fights* or *wars*; that is, it acts with ſtrength and violence, as men do in war. Firſt, it *luſts* ſtirring and moving inordinate figments in the *Mind*, deſires in the appetite and the *Affections*, propoſing them to the *Will.* But it reſts not there, it cannot reſt: it urgeth, preſſeth and purſueth its propoſals with earneſtneſs, ſtrength and vigour, fighting, and contending, and warring to obtain its end and purpoſe. Would it meerly *ſtir up* and *propoſe* things to the ſoul, and immediately acquieſce in the ſentence and judgment of the mind that the thing is evil, againſt God, and his will, and not farther to be inſiſted on, much ſin might be prevented that is now produced. But it *reſts*

not

not here, it proceeds to carry on its deſign, and that with earneſtneſs and contention. By this means, wicked men *inflame themſelves, Iſa.* 57. 5. They are *ſelf-inflamers*, as the word ſignifies, unto ſin, every ſpark of ſin is cheriſhed in them until it grows into a flame, and ſo it will do in others where it is ſo cheriſhed.

Now this fighting or warring of ſin conſiſts in two things.

Firſt, In its *rebellion* againſt grace, or the Law of the mind.

Secondly, In its *aſſaulting* the ſoul, contending for Rule and Sovereignty over it.

The firſt is expreſſed by the Apoſtle, *Rom.* 7. 23. *I find*, ſaith he, *another Law*, ἀντιστρατευόμενον τῷ νόμῳ τοῦ νοός, *rebelling againſt the Law of my mind.* There are, it ſeems, *two Laws* in us, the Law of the fleſh, or of ſin; and the Law of the mind, or of grace. But contrary Laws cannot both obtain *Sovereign* power over the ſame perſon, at the ſame time. The ſovereign power in Believers, is in the hand of the Law of grace; ſo the Apoſtle declares, *verſe* 22. *I delight in the Law of God in the inward man.* Obedience unto this Law is performed with *delight* and complacency in the inward man, becauſe its authority is *lawful* and good. So more expreſly, *chap.* 6. 14. *For ſin ſhall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the Law but under grace.* Now to war againſt the Law that hath a juſt Sovereignty, is to rebell; and ſo ἀντιστρατεύεσθαι ſignifies; it is to rebell, and ought to have been ſo tranſlated, *rebelling againſt the Law of my mind.* And this rebellion conſiſts in a ſtubborn obſtinate oppoſition

oppoſition unto the commands and directions of the Law of grace. Doth the *Law of the mind* command any thing as duty? doth it ſeverely riſe up againſt any thing that is evil? When the luſting of the Law of ſin riſes up to this degree, it contends againſt obedience with all its might, the effect whereof, as the Apoſtle tells us, is *the doing of that which we would not, and the not doing of that which we would, verſe* 15, 16. And we may gather a notable inſtance of the power of ſin in this its rebellion from this place. The *Law of grace* prevails upon the Will, ſo that it *would do* that which is good. *To will is preſent with me*, ver. 18. *When I would do good*, ver. 19. And again, ver. 21. *And I would not do evil*, ver. 19, 20. And it prevails upon the *underſtanding*, ſo that it approves or diſapproves according to the dictates of the Law of grace. *Ver.* 16. *I conſent unto the Law that it is good*; and *verſe* 15. The Judgment always lies on the ſide of grace. It prevails alſo on the *affections*, ver. 22. *I delight in the Law of God in the inward man.* Now if this be ſo, that grace hath the Sovereign power in the Underſtanding, Will, and Affections, whence is it that it doth not always prevail, that we do not always do that which we would, and abſtain from that which we would not? Is it not ſtrange that a man ſhould not do that which he chuſeth, willeth, liketh, delighteth in? Is there any thing more required to enable us unto that which is good? The Law of grace doth all as much as can be expected from it, that which in it ſelf is abundantly ſufficient for the perfecting of all holineſs in the fear of the Lord. But here lies the difficulty, in the intangling

tangling oppoſition that is made by the *rebellion* of this Law of ſin. Neither is it expreſſible with what vigour and variety ſin acts it ſelf in this matter. Sometimes it propoſeth diverſions, ſometimes it cauſeth wearineſs, ſometimes it finds out difficulties, ſometimes it ſtirs up contrary affections, ſometimes it begets prejudices, and one way or other intangles the ſoul, ſo that it never ſuffers grace to have an abſolute and complete ſucceſs in any duty. *Verſe* 18. τὸ κατεργάζεσθαι τὸ καλὸν οὐχ ἑυρίσκω; I find not the way *perfectly to work* out, or accompliſh that which is good; ſo the word ſignifies; and that from this oppoſition and reſiſtance that is made by the Law of ſin. Now this rebellion appears in two things.

Firſt, In the oppoſition that it makes unto the general *purpoſe* and courſe of the ſoul.

Secondly, In the oppoſition it makes unto *particular* duties.

Firſt, In the oppoſition it makes to the *general purpoſe* and courſe of the ſoul. There is none in whom is the Spirit of Chriſt, that is his, but it is his general deſign and purpoſe to walk in an univerſal conformity unto him in all things. Even from the inward frame of the heart, to the whole compaſs of his outward actions, ſo it is with him. This God requires in his Covenant, *Gen.* 17. 1. *Walk before me, and be thou perfect.* Accordingly his deſign is to walk before God, and his frame is ſincerity and uprightneſs therein. This is called, *Cleaving unto the Lord with purpoſe of heart*, *Acts.* 11. 23. that is, in all things, and that not with a ſloathful, dead, ineffectual purpoſe, but ſuch as is operative,

and

and ſets the whole ſoul at work in purſuit of it. This the Apoſtle ſets forth, *Phil.* 3. 12, 13, 14. *Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which alſo I am apprehended of Chriſt Jeſus. Brethren, I count not my ſelf to have apprehended, but this one thing I do, forgetting thoſe things which are behind and reaching forth unto thoſe things which are before, I preſs toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Chriſt Jeſus.* He uſeth three words excellently expreſſing the ſouls univerſal purſuit of this purpoſe of heart in cleaving unto God, Firſt, ſaith he, διώκω, ver. 12. *I follow after*, proſecute; the word ſignifies properly to *perſecute*, which with what earneſtneſs and diligence it is uſually done, we know. Secondly, ἐπεκτείνομαι, *I reach forward*, reaching with great intention of ſpirit and affections. It is a great and conſtant endeavour that is expreſſed in that word. Thirdly, κατὰ σκοπὸν διώκω, ſay we, *I preſs towards the mark*, that is, even as men that are running for a prize. All ſet forth the vigour, earneſtneſs, diligence and conſtancy that is uſed in the purſuit of this purpoſe. And this the nature of the principle of Grace requireth in them in whom it is. But yet we ſee with what *failings*, yea *fallings*, their purſuit of this courſe is attended. The frame of the heart is changed, the heart is ſtollen away, the affections intangled, eruptions of unbelief and diſtempered paſſions diſcovered, carnal wiſdom with all his attendances are ſet on work; all contrary to the general principle and purpoſe of the ſoul. And all this is from the *rebellion* of this Law

of

of ſin, ſtirring up and provoking the heart unto diſobedience, The Prophet gives this *character* of *hypocrites*, *Hoſ.* 10. 2. *Their heart is divided, therefore ſhall they be found faulty.* Now though this be *wholly* ſo in reſpect of the mind and judgment in hypocrites only, yet it is *partially* ſo in the beſt, in the ſenſe deſcribed. They have a diviſion, not *of* the heart, but *in* the heart; and thence it is that they are ſo often found faulty. So ſaith the Apoſtle, *ſo that we cannot do the things that we would*, *Gal.* 5. 17. We cannot accompliſh the deſign of cloſe walking according to the Law of grace, becauſe of the contrariety and rebellion of this Law of ſin.

Secondly, It rebells alſo in reſpect unto particular duties. It raiſeth a combuſtion in the ſoul againſt the particular commands and deſignings of the Law of grace: *You cannot do the things that you would*; that is, the duties which you judge incumbent on you which you approve and delight in in the inward man, you cannot do them as you would. Take an inſtance in prayer. A man addreſſeth himſelf unto that duty, he would not only perform it, but he would perform it in that manner that the nature of the duty, and his own condition do require. He would *pray in the ſpirit*, fervently, with ſighs and groans that cannot be uttered; in faith with love and delight, pouring forth his ſoul unto the Lord: this he aims at. Now oftentimes he ſhall find a rebellion, a fighting of the Law of ſin in this matter. He ſhall find difficulty to get *any thing* done, who thought to do *all things*. I do not ſay, that it is thus *always*, but it is ſo when ſin *wars* and *rebells*, which expreſſeth

preſſeth an eſpecial acting of its power. Woful intanglements do poor creatures oftentimes meet withall upon this account. Inſtead of that free inlarged Communion with God that they aim at, the beſt that their ſouls arrive unto, is but to go away mourning for their folly, deadneſs and indiſpoſition. In a word, there is no command of the Law of Grace that is known, liked of, and approved by the ſoul, but when it comes to be obſerved, this *Law of ſin* one way or other makes head and rebels againſt it. And this is the firſt way of its *fighting*.

Secondly, It doth not only *rebel* and reſiſt, but it aſſaults the ſoul; it ſets upon the Law of the mind and grace, which is the ſecond part of its warring, 1 *Pet.* 2. 11. στρατεύονται κατὰ τῆς ψυχῆς, *they fight*, or war *againſt the ſoul*. *Jam.* 4. 1. στρατευόντων ἐν τοῖς μέλεσιν ὑμῶν, *They fight*, or war *in your members*. *Peter* ſhews what they oppoſe and fight againſt, namely the *Soul*, and the Law of Grace therein; *James*, what they fight with, or by, namely the members, or the corruption that is in our mortal bodies. Ἀπιστρατεύεσθαι is to rebel againſt a ſuperiour; στρατεύεσθαι is to aſſault or war for ſuperiority. It takes the part of an *Aſſailant* as well as of a reſiſter. It makes attempts for rule and ſovereignty, as well as oppoſeth the rule of grace. Now all war and fighting hath ſomewhat of *violence* in it, and there is therefore ſome *violence* in that acting of ſin, which the Scripture calls *fighting* and warring. And this aſſailing efficacy of ſin, as diſtinguiſhed from its rebelling before treated of, conſiſts in theſe things that enſue.

Firſt, All its *poſitive* actings in ſtirring up unto ſin, belong to this head. Oftentimes by the vanity of the mind, or the ſenſuality of the affections, the folly of the imaginations, it ſets upon the *ſoul* then, when the Law of grace is not actually putting it on duty, ſo that therein it doth not rebel but aſſault. Hence the Apoſtle cries out, *Rom.* 7. 24. *Who ſhall deliver me from it*, who ſhall *reſcue* me out of its hand, as the word ſignifies. When we *purſue* an enemy, and he reſiſts us, we do not cry out, *Who ſhall deliver us*, for we are the aſſailants; but, *Who ſhall reſcue me*, is the cry of one who is ſet upon by an enemy. So it is here, a man is aſſaulted by his own *luſts*, as *James* ſpeaks. By the way ſide, in his employment, under a duty, ſin ſets upon the ſoul with vain imaginations, fooliſh deſires, and would willingly employ the ſoul to make proviſion for its ſatisfaction; which the Apoſtle cautions us againſt, *Rom.* 13. 14. τὴ σαρκὸς προνοιαν μὴ ποιεῖσθε εἰς ἐπιθυμίας, Do not accompliſh the providence or projection of the fleſh, for its own ſatisfaction.

Secondly, Its *importunity* and urgency ſeems to be noted in this expreſſion of its *warring*. Enemies in war are reſtleſs, preſſing and importunate. So is the Law of ſin. Doth it ſet upon the ſoul? caſt off its motions, it returns again; rebuke them by the power of grace, they withdraw for a while, and return again. Set before them the Croſs of Chriſt, they do as thoſe that came to take him, at ſight of him they went backwards, and fell unto the ground, but they aroſe again and laid hands on him. Sin gives places for a ſeaſon, but returns and

preſſeth

preſſeth on the ſoul again. Mind it of the love of God in Chriſt, though it be ſtricken, yet it gives not over. Preſent *Hell-fire* unto it, it ruſheth into the midſt of thoſe flames. Reproach it with its folly and madneſs, it knows no ſhame, but preſſeth on ſtill. Let the thoughts of the mind ſtrive to flie from it, it follows as on the wings of the wind. And by this *importunity* it wearies and warrs out the ſoul, and if the great remedy, *Rom* 8. 13. come not timely, it prevails to a conqueſt. There is nothing more marvellous nor dreadful in the working of ſin, than this of its *importunity*. The ſoul knows not what to make of it; it diſlikes, abhors, abominates the evil it tends unto, it deſpiſeth the thoughts of it, hates them as hell, and yet is by it ſelf impoſed on with them, as if it were another perſon, an expreſs enemy got within him. All this the Apoſtle diſcovers, *Rom.* 7. 15, 17. *The things that I do I hate*; it is not of outward actions, but the inward riſings of the mind that he treats. *I hate them*, ſaith he, I abominate them. But why then will he have any thing more to do with them? If he hate them, and abhor himſelf for them, let them alone, have no more to do with them, and ſo end the matter. Alas, ſaith he, *verſe* 17. *It is no more I that do it, but ſin that dwelleth in me.* I have one within me that is my enemy, that with endleſs reſtleſs importunity puts theſe things upon me, even the things that I hate and abominate; I cannot be rid of them, I am weary of my ſelf, I cannot flie from them; *O wretched man that I am, who ſhall deliver me?* I do not ſay that this is the ordinary condition of Believers, but thus it is often,

often, when this Law of Sin riſeth up to war and fighting. It is not thus with them in reſpect of particular ſins, this or that ſin, outward ſins, ſins of life or converſation; but yet in reſpect of vanity of mind, inward and ſpiritual diſtempers, it is often ſo. Some I know pretend to great perfection, but I am reſolved to believe the Apoſtle before them all and every one.

Thirdly, It carryes on its *war*, by entangling of the Affections and drawing them into a combination againſt the mind. Let Grace be enthroned in the mind and judgement, yet if the *Law of Sin* layes hold upon, and entangles the Affections, or any of them, it hath gotten a Fort from whence it continually aſſaults the ſoul. Hence the great duty of *mortification* is chiefly directed to take place upon the Affections, Col. 3. 5. *Mortifie therefore your Members which are upon the earth, fornication, uncleanneſs, inordinate Affection, concupiſcence and covetouſneſs which is Idolatry.* The members that are upon the Earth, are our Affections. For in the outward part of the body, ſins not ſeated: in particular, not covetouſneſs which is there enumerated to be mortified amongſt our *Members that are on the Earth.* Yea, after Grace hath taken poſſeſſion of the ſoul, the *Affections* do become the principal ſeat of the remainders of ſin. And therefore *Paul* ſaith, that this Law *is in our Membres*, *Rom.* 7. 23. and *James*, that it wars in *our Members*, *Chap.* 4. 1. that is, our Affections. And there is no eſtimate to be taken of the work of *mortification* aright, but by the Affections. We may every day ſee Perſons of very eminent Light, that

that yet viſibly have unmortified hearts and converſations. Their Affections have not been *crucified* with Chriſt. Now then when this Law of Sin can poſſeſs any Affection whatever it be, love, delight, fear, it will make from it, and by it, fearful aſſaults upon the ſoul. For inſtance, hath it got the love of any one entangled with the world, or the things of it, *the luſt of the fleſh, the luſt of the eyes, or the pride of life:* How will it take advantage on every occaſion, to break in upon the ſoul? It ſhall do nothing, attempt nothing, be in no place, or company, perform no duty, private or publick, but ſin will have one blow or other at it; it will be one way or other ſoliciting for it ſelf.

This is the ſumm of what we ſhall offer unto this acting of the *Law of Sin* in a way of *fighting* and warring againſt our ſouls, which is ſo often mentioned in the Scripture. And a due conſideration of it is of no ſmall advantage unto us, eſpecially to bring us unto ſelf-abaſement, to teach us to walk humbly and mournfully before God. There are two things that are ſuited to humble the ſouls of men. And they are, Firſt, A due conſideration of God, and then of themſelves. Of God in his Greatneſs, Glory, Holineſs, Power, Majeſty and Authority; of our ſelves in our mean, abject, and ſinful condition. Now of all things in our condition, there is nothing ſo ſuited unto this end and purpoſe, as that which lyes before us; namely, the vile remainders of enmity againſt God which are yet in our hearts and natures. And it is no ſmall evidence of a gracious ſoul,

when it is willing to ſearch it ſelf in this matter, and to be helped therein from a word of truth. When it is willing that the Word ſhould dive into the ſecret parts of the heart, and rip open whatever of evil and corruption lyes therein. The Prophet ſayes of *Ephraim*, Hoſ. 10. 11. *He loved to tread out the corn*; he loved to work when he might eat, to have alwayes the corn before him; but God ſayes he, *would cauſe him to plough*; a labour no leſs needful, though at preſent not ſo delightful. Moſt men love to hear of the *doctrine of Grace*, of the pardon of ſin, of free love, and ſuppoſe they find *food* therein; however it is evident that they grow and thrive in the life and notion of them. But to be breaking up the *fallow ground* of their hearts, to be enquiring after the weeds and Briars that grow in them, they delight not ſo much. Though this be no leſs neceſſary than the other. This path is not ſo beaten as that of Grace, nor ſo trod in, though it be the only way to come to a true knowledge of Grace it ſelf. It may be ſome who are wiſe and grown in other truths, may yet be ſo little skilled in ſearching their own hearts, that they may be ſlow in the perception and underſtanding of theſe things. But this *ſloth* and neglect is to be ſhaken off, if we have any regard unto our own ſouls. It is more than probable, that many a falſe *Hypocrite* who have deceived themſelves as well as others, becauſe they thought the Doctrine of the Goſpel pleaſed them, and therefore ſuppoſed they believed it, might be delivered from their ſoul ruining deceits, if they would diligently apply themſelves unto this ſearch

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of their won hearts. Or would other *Profeſſors* walk with ſo much boldneſs and ſecurity as ſome do, if they conſidered aright what a deadly watchful Enemy they continually carry about with them and in them; Would they ſo much *indulge* as they do to carnal joyes, and pleaſures, or purſue their periſhing affairs with ſo much delight and greedineſs as they do? It were to be wiſhed, that we would all apply our hearts more to this work, even to come to a true underſtanding of the nature, power and ſubtilty of this our Adverſary, that our ſouls may be humbled; and that,

First, In walking with God; His delight is with the humble and contrite ones, thoſe that tremble at his word, the mourners in *Sion*, and ſuch are we only, when we have a due ſenſe of our own vile condition. This will beget reverence of God, ſenſe of our diſtance from him, admiration of his Grace and condeſcenſion, a due valuation of mercy, far above thoſe light verbal aiery *attainments* that ſome have boaſted of.

Secondly, In walking with others, it layes in proviſion to prevent thoſe great evils of judging, ſpiritual unmerciſulneſs, harſh cenſuring, which I have obſerved to have been pretended by many, who at the ſame time, as afterwards hath appeared, have been guilty of greater or worſer crimes, than thoſe which they have raved againſt in others. This, I ſay, will lead us to meekneſs, compaſſion, readineſs to forgive, to paſs by offences, even when we ſhall conſider what is our ſtate, as the *Apoſtle* plainly declares, *Gal.* 6. 1. The man that underſtands the evil of hi sownheart,

how vile it is, is the only useful, fruitful and solidly believing and obedient person. Others are fit only to delude themselves, to disquiet Families, Churches, and all Relations whatever. Let us then consider our hearts wisely, and then go and see if we can be proud of our *gifts*, our graces, our valuation and esteem amongst Professors, our enjoyments. Let us go then and judge, condemn, reproach others that have been tempted; we shall find a great inconsistency in these things. And many things of the like nature might be here added upon the consideration of this woful effect of *Indwelling Sin*. The way of opposing and defeating its design herein shall be afterwards considered.

CHAP. VII.

The Captivating power of Indwelling-Sin, wherein it consisteth. The prevalency of Sin, when from it self, when from Temptation. The Rage and Madness that is in Sin.

THe third thing assigned unto this *Law of Sin* in its opposition unto God, and the Law of his Grace, is, that it *leads the soul Captive*, Rom. 7.23. *I find a Law leading me Captive, (Captivating me) unto the Law of Sin.* And this is the utmost height which the Apostle in that place carries the opposition

oppoſition and warring of the remainders of Indwelling-Sin unto; cloſing the conſideration of it with a complaint of the ſtate and condition of Believers thereby; and an earneſt prayer for deliverance from it, ver. 24. *O wretched man that I am, who ſhall deliver me from this body of death.* What is contained in this expreſſion, and intended by it, ſhall be declared in the enſuing Obſervations.

First, It is not directly the *power* and actings of the Law of Sin that are here expreſſed, but its *ſucceſs* in and upon its actings. But *ſucceſs* is the greateſt evidence of power, and *leading Captive* in War is the height of *ſucceſs*. None can aime at greater *ſucceſs*, than to lead their Enemies Captive. And it is a peculiar expreſſion in the Scripture of *great ſucceſs*. So the Lord Chriſt on his victory over Satan, is ſaid to *lead Captivity Captive*, *Epheſ.* 4. 8. That is, to conquer him, who had conquered and prevailed upon others. And this he did when by death he *deſtroyed him that had the power of death, that is the Devil*, *Heb.* 2. 14. Here then a great *prevalency* and power of ſin in its warring againſt the ſoul is diſcovered. It ſo wars, as to *lead Captive*; which had it not great power, it could not do, eſpecially againſt that *reſiſtance* of the ſoul which is included in this expreſſion.

Secondly, It is ſaid, that it leads the ſoul captive *unto the Law of Sin*. Not to this or that ſin, particular ſin, actual ſin, but to the *Law of Sin*. God for the moſt part ordereth things ſo, and gives out ſuch ſupplies of grace unto Believers, as that they ſhall not be made a prey unto *this* or *that* particular ſin, that it ſhould pre-

prevail in them, and compel them to ſerve it in the luſts thereof, that it ſhould have Dominion over them, that they ſhould be *Captives* and ſlaves unto it. This is that which *David* prayes ſo earneſtly againſt, Pſalm. 19. 12, 13. *Cleanſe thou me from ſecret faults, keep back thy ſervant alſo from preſumptuous ſins, let them not have dominion over me, then ſhall I be upright.* He ſuppoſeth the continuance of the Law of Sin in him, *ver.* 12. which will bring forth *errors of life*, and ſecret ſins againſt which he findeth relief in pardoning and cleanſing mercy which he prayes for. This ſaith he will be my condition. But for *ſins of pride* and boldneſs, ſuch all ſins are, that get *Dominion* in a man, that make a *Captive* of a man, the Lord reſtrain thy ſervant from them. For what ſin ſoever gets ſuch power in a man, be it in its own nature ſmall or great, it becomes in him in whom it is, a ſin of *boldneſs, pride*, and preſumption. For theſe things are not reckoned from the nature or kind of the ſin, but from its prevalency and cuſtomarineſs, wherein its pride, boldneſs, and contempt of God doth conſiſt. To the ſame purpoſe, if I miſtake not, prayes *Jabez*, 1 Chron. 4. 10. *O that thou wouldſt bleſs me indeed and enlarge my Coaſt, and that thine hand may be with me, and that thou wouldſt keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me.* The holy man took occaſion from his *own name* to pray againſt ſin, that that might not be a *grief and ſorrow* to him by its power and prevalency. I confeſs ſometimes it may come to this with a Believer, that for a ſeaſon he may be *lead Captive* by ſome particular ſin. It may have ſo much pre-

prevalency *in* him, as to have power *over* him. So it ſeems to have been with *David* when he lay ſo long in his ſin without repentance. And was plainly ſo with thoſe in Iſa. 57. 17, 18. *For the iniquity of his covetouſneſs was I wroth, and ſmote him, I hid me, and was wroth, and he went on frowardly in the way of his heart; I have ſeen his wayes, and will heal him.* They continued under the power of their *covetouſneſs*: ſo that no dealings of God with them, for ſo long a time could reclaim them. But for the moſt part when any Luſt or Sin doth ſo prevail, it is from the advantage and ſartherance that it hath got by ſome *powerful temptation* of Satan. He hath poyſoned it, enflamed it, and entangled the ſoul. So the Apoſtle ſpeaking of ſuch as through ſin were fallen off from their holineſs ſayes, *they were in the ſnare of the Devil, being taken Captive by him at his will*, 2 Tim. 2.26. Though it were their own luſt, that they ſerved, yet they were brought into bondage thereunto, by being entangled in ſome ſnare of Satan. And thence they are ſaid to be *taken alive*, as a poor Beaſt in a toyle.

And here, by the way we may a little enquire whether the prevailing power of a particular ſin in any, be from it ſelf, or from the influence of *temptation* upon it, concerning which at preſent take only theſe two Obſervations.

Firſt, Much of the *prevalency* of ſin upon the ſoul is certainly from *Satan*, when the perplexing and captivating ſin hath no peculiar footing, nor advantage in the nature, conſtitution, or condition of the ſinner. When any *luſt* grows high and prevailing more than others upon its own account,

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it is from the peculiar advantage that it hath in the natural conſtitution, or the ſtation or condition of the perſon in the world. For otherwiſe the Law of Sin gives an equal propenſity unto all evil, an equal vigour unto every luſt. When therefore it cannot be diſcerned, that the *captivating* ſin is peculiary fixed in the nature of the ſinner, or is advantaged from his education or employment in the world, the prevalency of it is peculiary from Satan. He hath got to the root of it, and hath given it poyſon and ſtrength. Yea, perhaps ſometimes that which may ſeem to the *ſoul* to be the corrupt *luſting* of the heart, is nothing but Satans impoſing his ſuggeſtions on the imagination. If then a man find an importunate rage from any corruption, that is not evidently ſeated in his nature: Let him as the Papiſts ſay, *croſs* himſelf, or fly by faith to the Croſs of Chriſt, for the Devil is nigh at hand.

Secondly, When a Luſt is prevalent unto *Captivity* where it brings in no advantage to the *fleſh*, it is from Satan. All that the Law of Sin doth of it ſelf, is to ſerve the *providence of the fleſh*, *Rom.* 13. 14. And it muſt bring in unto it ſomewhat of the profits and pleaſures that are its object. Now if the prevailing ſin do not ſo act it ſelf, if it be more ſpiritual and inward, it is much from Satan by the imagination, more than the corruption of the heart it ſelf. But this by the way.

I ſay then, that the Apoſtle treats not here, of our being *captivated* unto this or that ſin, but unto the *Law of Sin*. That is, we are compelled to bear its preſence and burden whether we will or no.

no. Sometimes the ſoul thinks or hopes that it may through grace be *utterly freed* from this troubleſome Inmate. Upon ſome ſweet enjoyment of God, ſome full ſupply of grace, ſome return from wandering, ſome deep affliction, ſome through humiliation, the poor ſoul begins to hope that it ſhall now be freed from the Law of Sin. But after a while it perceives that it is quite otherwiſe. Sin acts again, makes good its old ſtation, and the ſoul finds that whether it will or no, it muſt bear its yoke. This makes it ſigh and cry out for deliverance.

Thirdly, This leading Captive argues a prevalency againſt the *renitency* or contrary actings of the will. This is intimated plainly in this expreſſion; namely, that the will oppoſeth, and makes head as it were againſt the working of ſin. This the Apoſtle declares in thoſe expreſſions which he uſes, *ver.* 15, 19, 20. And herein conſiſts the *luſting of the Spirit* againſt the fleſh, *Gal.* 5. 17. That is, the contending of grace to expell and ſubdue it. The ſpiritual habits of grace that are in the *Will*, do ſo reſiſt and act againſt it. And the excitation of thoſe habits by the Spirit are directed to the ſame purpoſe. This leading *Captive*, is contrary I ſay, to the inclinations and actings of the *renewed will*. No man is made a Captive but againſt his will. Captivity is miſery and trouble, and no man willingly puts himſelf into trouble. Men chuſe it in its *cauſes*, and in the wayes and means leading unto it, but not in it ſelf. So the Propher informs us, Hoſ. 5. 11. *Ephraim was not willingly oppreſſed and broken in Judgment*

Judgement; that was his misery and trouble; but he willingly walked after the Commandement of the *Idolatrous Kings* which brought him thereunto. Whatever consent then the soul may give unto sin, which is the means of this Captivity, it gives none to the *Captivity* it self; that is against the will wholly. Hence these things ensue.

First, *That the power of sin is great*, which is that which we are in the demonstration of; and this appears in its prevalency unto Captivity; against the actings and contendings of the will for liberty from it. Had it no opposition made unto it, or were its Adversary, weak, negligent, slothful, it were no great evidence of its power, that it made Captives. But its prevailing against diligence, activity, watchfulness, the constant renitency of the will, this evinceth its efficacy.

Secondly, This leading Captive intimates *manifold particular successes*. Had it not success in particular it could not be said at all to lead captive. Rebell it might, assail it might, but it cannot be said to *lead Captive* without some successes. And there are several degrees of the success of the Law of Sin in the soul. Sometimes it carries the Person unto outward *actual sin* which is its utmost aim. Sometimes it obtaineth the *consent of the will*, but is cast out by grace, and proceeds no farther. Sometimes it wearies and entangles the soul, that it turns aside as it were, and leaves contending which is a success also. One or more, or all of these must be, where *Captivity* takes place. Such a kind of course doth the Apostle ascribe unto covetousness, 1 *Tim.* 6. 9.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, This leading captive manifeſts this condition *to be miſerable and wretched.* To be thus yoked and dealt withall againſt the judgment of the mind, the choice and conſent of the will, its utmoſt ſtrivings and contendings, how ſad is it? When the neck is ſore and tender with former preſſures, to be compell'd to bear the yoke again, this pierces, this grieves, this even breaks the heart. When the ſoul is principled by grace unto a *loathing* of ſin, of every evil way, to an hatred of the leaſt diſcrepancy between it ſelf and the holy will of God, then to be impoſed on by this *Law of ſin*, with all that enmity and folly, that deadneſs and filth, wherewith it is attended: what more dreadful condition? All captivity is dreadful in its own nature; the greateſt aggravation of it is from the condition of the Tyrant unto whom any one is captivated. Now what can be worſe than this Law of ſin? Hence the Apoſtle having once mentioned this captivity, cries out as one quite weary and ready to faint, *ver.* 24.

Fourthly, This condition is *peculiar to Believers.* Unregenerate men are not ſaid to be *led captive* to the Law of ſin. They may indeed be led captive unto this or that particular ſin or corruption, that is, they may be forced to ſerve it againſt the power of their convictions. They are convinced of the evil of it, an adulterer of his uncleanneſs, a drunkard of his abomination, and make ſome reſolutions, it may be, againſt it. But their luſt is too hard for them, they cannot ceaſe to ſin, and ſo are made captives or ſlaves to this or that particular ſin. But they cannot be ſaid to be *led captive*

to

to the Law of ſin, and that becauſe they are willingly ſubject thereunto. It hath, as it were, a rightful dominion over them, and they oppoſe it not, but only when it hath irruptions to the diſturbance of their conſciences. And then the oppoſition they make unto it is not from their *wills*, but is the meer acting of an affrighted conſcience, and a convinced mind. They regard not the *nature* of ſin, but its *guilt* and conſequences. But to be brought into captivity, is that which befalls a man againſt his will. Which is all that ſhall be ſpoken unto this degree of the actings of the power of ſin, manifeſting it ſelf in its ſucceſs.

The fourth and laſt degree of the oppoſition made by the Law of ſin to God, and the Law of his Will and Grace, is in its *Rage* and *Madneſs*. There is *Madneſs* in its nature, *Eccleſ.* 9. 3. *The heart of the ſons of men is full of evil, and madneſs is in their heart.* The evil that the heart of man is full of by nature, is that *Indwelling-ſin* whereof we ſpeak. And this is ſo in their heart, that it riſeth up unto *madneſs*. The holy Ghoſt expreſſeth this rage of ſin by a fit ſimilitude which he uſeth in ſundry places, as *Jer.* 2. 24. *Hoſ.* 8. 9. It maketh *men as a wild Aſs*; ſhe traverſeth her ways, and ſnuffeth up the wind, and runneth whither her mind or luſt leads her. And he ſaith of Idolaters enraged with their luſts, that they *are mad upon their idols*, *Jer.* 5. 38. We may a little conſider what lies in this *madneſs* and rage of ſin, and how it riſeth up thereunto.

First, For the *nature* of it, it ſeems to conſiſt in a violent, heady, pertinacious preſſing unto evil or ſin;

ſin. *Violence*, importunity and pertinacy are in it. It is the tearing and torturing of the ſoul by any ſin to force its conſent, and to obtain ſatisfaction. It riſeth up in the heart, is denied by the Law of grace, and rebuked; it returns and exerts its poiſon again; the ſoul is ſtartled, caſts it of; it returns again with new violence and importunity, the ſoul cries out for help and deliverance, looks round about to all ſprings of Goſpel grace and relief, trembles at the furious aſſaults of ſin, and caſts it ſelf into the arms of Chriſt for deliverance. And if it be not able to take that courſe, it is foiled and hurried up and down through the mire and filth of fooliſh imaginations, corrupt and noiſome luſts, which rend and tear it, as if they would devour its whole ſpiritual life and power. See 1 *Tim.* 6. 9, 10. 2 *Pet.* 2. 14. It was not much otherwiſe with them whom we inſtanced in before, *Iſa.* 57. 17. They had an inflamed inraged luſt working in them; even *covetouſneſs*, or the love of this world, by which, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, men *pierce themſelves through with many ſorrows*. God is angry with them, and diſcovereth his wrath by all the ways and means that it was poſſible for them to be made ſenſible thereof. He was *wroth* and ſmote them; but though it may be this ſtaggered them a little, yet they went on. *He is angry, and hides himſelf from them*, deſerts them as to his gracious aſſiſting comforting Preſence. Doth this work the effect? No they go on *frowardly* ſtill, as men mad on their covetouſneſs. Nothing can put a ſtop to their raging luſts. This is *plain madneſs* and fury. We need not ſeek far for inſtances, we ſee men mad on

their lusts every day: And which is the worst kind of *madness*, their lusts do not rage so much in them, as they rage in the pursuit of them. Are those greedy pursuits of things in the world, which we see some men engaged in, though they have other pretences, indeed any thing else but plain *madness* in the pursuit of their lusts? God who searcheth the hearts of men, knows, that the most of things that are done with other pretences in the world, are nothing but the actings of men mad and furious in the pursuit of their lusts.

Secondly, That sin ariseth not unto this height ordinarily, but when it hath got a double advantage.

First, That it be provoked, enraged and heightned by some great *temptation*. Though it be a poison in it self, yet being inbred in nature, it grows not violenty outragious without the contribution of some new poison of *Sathan* unto it in a suitable temptation. It was the advantage that Sathan got against *David*, by a suitable temptation that raised his lusts to that *rage* and *madness*, which it went forth unto in the business of *Bathsheba* and *Uriah*. Though sin be always a fire in the bones, yet it flames not, unless Sathan come with his bellows to blow it up. And let any one in whom the Law of sin ariseth to this height of rage, seriously consider, and he may find out where the devil stands and puts in the business.

Secondly, It must be advantaged by some *former* entertainment and prevalency. Sin grows not to this height at its first assault. Had it not been suffered to make its entrance, had there not been some

ſome yielding in the ſoul, this had not come about. The great wiſdom and ſecurity of the ſoul in dealing with in-dwelling ſin, is to put a violent ſtop unto its *beginnings*, its firſt motions and actings. Venture all on the firſt attempt. Die rather than yield one ſtep unto it. If through the *deceit* of ſin, or the *negligence* of the ſoul, or its carnal confidence, to give bounds to luſts actings at other ſeaſons, it makes any entrance into the ſoul, and finds any entertainment, it gets ſtrength and power, and inſenſibly ariſeth to the frame under conſideration. Thou hadſt never had the experience of the *fury* of ſin, if thou hadſt not been content with ſome of its *dalliances*. Hadſt thou not brought up this ſervant, this ſlave delicately, it would not have now preſumed beyond a ſon. Now when the *Law of ſin* in any particular hath got this double advantage, the furtherance of a vigorous temptation, and ſome prevalency formerly obtained, whereby it is let into the ſtrengths of the ſoul, it often riſeth up to this frame whereof we ſpeak.

Thirdly, We may ſee what *accompanies* this rage and madneſs, what are the properties of it, and what effects it produceth.

Firſt, There is in it the caſting off, for a time at leaſt, of the yoke, rule and government of the Spirit and Law of Grace. Where Grace hath the *dominion*, it will never utterly be expell'd from its Throne, it will ſtill keep its right and ſovereignty. But its *influences* may for a ſeaſon be intercepted, and its government be ſuſpended by the power of ſin. Can we think that the *Law of grace* had any actual influence of rule on the heart of *David*, when

upon the provocation received from *Nabal*, he was so hurried with the desire of self-revenge, that he cryed, *gird on your swords*, to his companions, and resolved not to leave alive one man of his whole houshold, 1 *Sam.* 25 34. Or that *Asa* was in any better frame, when he *smote the Prophet*, and put him in Prison, that spake unto him in the name of the Lord. Sin in this case is like an *untamed Horse*, which having first cast off his Rider, runs away with fierceness and rage. It first casts off a present sense of the yoke of Christ, and the Law of his Grace, and then hurries the soul at its pleasure. Let us a little consider how this is done.

The seat and residence of grace is in the whole soul, it is in the Inner man, it is in the mind, the will, and the affections; for the *whole soul is renewed by it unto the Image of God*, *Ephes.* 4. 23, 24. And the whole man is a *new Creature*, 2 *Cor.* 5. 17. And in all these doth it exert its power and efficacy; Its Rule or Dominion is the pursuit of its effectual working in all the faculties of the soul, as they are one united principle of moral and spiritual operations. So then, the interrupting of its exercise, of its Rule and Power by the Law of Sin, must consist in its contrary acting in and upon the faculties and affections of the soul, whereon, and by which grace should exert its power and efficacy. And this it doth. It *darkens* the mind, partly through innumerable vain prejudices, and false reasonings, as we shall see when we come to consider its *deceitfulness*; and partly through the *steaming* of the Affections, heated with the noisome lusts that have laid hold on them.

them. Hence that ſaving light that is in the mind is clouded and ſtifled, that it cannot put forth its *transforming power* to change the ſoul into the likeneſs of Chriſt diſcovered unto it, which is its proper work, *Rom.* 12. 2. The habitual inclination of the will to obedience, which is the next way of the working of the Law of grace, is firſt *weakned*, then caſt aſide, and rendered uſeleſs by the continual ſolicitations of ſin and temptation; ſo that the will firſt lets go its hold, and diſputes whether it ſhall yield or no; and at laſt gives up it ſelf to its Adverſary; and for the *Affections* commonly the beginning of this evil is in them. They croſs one another, and torture the ſoul with their impetuous violence. By this way is the Rule of the Law of Grace intercepted by the Law of Sin, even by impoſing upon it in the whole *ſeat* of its Government. When this is done, it is ſad work that ſin will make in the ſoul. the Apoſtle warns Believers to take heed hereof, *Rom.* 6. 12. *Let not ſin therefore reign in your mortal bodies that you ſhould obey it in the luſts thereof.* Look to it that it get not the *Dominion*, that it uſurp not Rule, no not for a moment. It will labour to intrude it ſelf into the *Throne*, watch againſt it, or a woful ſtate and condition lyes at the door. This then accompanies this rage and madneſs of the Law of Sin. It caſts off during its prevalency the Rule of the Law of Grace wholly. It ſpeaks in the ſoul, but is not heard, it commands the contrary, but is not obeyed. It cryes out, *do not this abominable thing which the Lord hateth*, but is not regarded; that is, not ſo far as to be able to

put a present stop to the rage of sin, and to recover its own rule, which God in his own time restores to it by the power of his Spirit dwelling in us.

Secondly, *Madness* or rage are accompanied with *fearlessness* and contempt of danger. It takes away the power of consideration, and all that influence that it ought to have upon the soul. Hence sinners that are wholly under the power of this rage, are said, *to run upon God and the thick bosses of his buckler*, Job 16. 21. That wherein he is armed for their utter ruine. They despise the utmost that he can do to them, being secretly resolved to accomplish their lusts though it cost them their souls. Some few considerations will farther clear this unto us.

First, Ofttimes when the soul is broken loose from the power of *renewing grace*, God deals with it to keep it within bounds by *preventing grace*. So the Lord declares that he will deal with *Israel*, *Hos.* 2. 6. seeing thou hast rejected me, I will take another course with thee. I will lay obstacles before thee that thou shalt not be able to pass on whither the fury of thy lusts would drive thee. He will propose that to them from without, that shall obstruct them in their progress.

Secondly, These *hinderances* that God layes in the way of sinners, as shall be afterwards at large declared, are of two sorts.

First, *Rational considerations* taken from the consequence of the sin and evil that the soul is solicited unto, and perplexed withal. Such are the *fear of Death*, Judgement, and Hell, falling into the hands

hands of the Living God, who is a consuming fire. Whilest a man is under the power of the Law of the Spirit of Life, the *Love of Christ constraineth him*, 2 *Cor.* 5. 14. The principle of his doing good and abstaining from evil, is *faith working by love*, accompanied with a following of Christ because of the sweet savour of his name. But now when this blessed *easie yoke* is for a season cast off, so as was manifested before, God sets an hedge of *terrour* before the soul, minds it of Death and Judgement to come, flashes the flames of Hell Fire in the face, fills the soul with consideration of all the evil consequence of sin to deter it from its purpose. To this end doth he make use of all threatnings recorded in the Law and Gospel. To this Head also may be referred all the considerations that may be taken from things temporal, as shame, reproach, scandal, punishments, and the like. By the consideration of these things, I say, doth God set an *hedge* before them.

Secondly, Providential Dispensations are used by the Lord to the same purpose, and these are of two sorts;

First, Such as are suited to work upon the soul, and to cause it to desist and give over in its lustings and pursuit of sin. Such are *Afflictions* and Mercies, *Isa.* 57. 17. *I was wroth and I smote them*, I testified my dislike of their wayes by Afflictions; So *Hos.* 2. 9, 11, 12. *God chastens men with pains on their bodies*, saith he, in *Job*, *to turn them from their purpose*, *and to hide sin from them*, *Job* 33. 17, 19. And other wayes he hath to come to them and touch them, as in their Names, Relations,

Eſtates and deſirable things. Or elſe he heaps mercies on them that they may conſider whom they are rebelling againſt. It may be ſignal diſtinguiſhing mercies are made their portion for many dayes.

Secondly, Such as *actually hinder* the ſoul from purſuing ſin, though it be reſolved ſo to do. The various wayes whereby God doth *this*, we muſt afterwards conſider.

Theſe are the wayes I ſay, whereby the ſoul is dealt withal, after the Law of *Indwelling-Sin* hath caſt off for a ſeaſon the influencing power of the Law of Grace. But now when *luſt* riſes up to *rage* or *madneſs*, it will alſo contemn all theſe, even the Rod and him that hath appointed it. It will ruſh on ſhame, reproaches, wrath, and whatever may befall it. That is, though they be preſented unto it, it will venture upon them all. Rage and madneſs is *fearleſs*. And this it doth two wayes.

Firſt, It *poſſeſſeth the mind*, that it ſuffers not the conſideration of theſe things to dwell upon it, but renders the thoughts of them ſlight and *evanid*. Or if the mind do force it ſelf to a contemplation of them, yet it interpoſeth between it and the *Affections*, that they ſhall not be influenced by it in any proportion to what is required. The ſoul in ſuch a condition will be able to take ſuch things into contemplation, and not at all to be moved by them. And where they do prevail for a ſeaſon, yet they are inſenſibly wrought off from the heart again.

Secondly, By ſecret ſtubborn *reſolves* to venture all upon the way wherein it is. And

And this is the ſecond branch of this Evidence of the *power of ſin*, taken from the oppoſition that it makes to the *Law of Grace*, *as it were* by the way of force, ſtrength and violence; the conſideration of its *deceit* doth now follow.

CHAP. VIII.

Indwelling-Sin proved powerful from its deceit. Proved to be deceitful. The General Nature of Deceit. Jam. 1. 14. *opened. How the mind is drawn off from its Duty by the Deceitfulneſs of Sin. The principal Duties of the mind in our Obedience. The wayes and Means whereby it is turned from it.*

THe ſecond part of the evidence of the *power of Sin* from its manner of operation, is taken from its *deceitfulneſs*. It adds in its working, *deceit* unto *power*. The efficacy of that muſt needs be great, and is carefully to be watched againſt, by all ſuch as value their ſouls, where power and deceit are combined, eſpecially advantaged and aſſiſted by all the wayes and means before inſiſted on.

Before we come to ſhew wherein the nature of this *deceitfulneſs of ſin* doth conſiſt, and how it prevaileth thereby, ſome teſtimonies ſhall be briefly given in unto the *thing it ſelf*, and ſome light into the *general nature* of it.

That

That Sin, *Indwelling-Sin*, is deceitful, we have the expreſs Teſtimony of the *Holy Ghoſt*, as *Heb.* 3. 13. *Take heed that ye be not hardened by the deceitfulneſs of ſin.* Deceitful it is, take heed of it, watch againſt it, or it will produce its utmoſt effect in *hardening of the heart* againſt God. It is on the account of ſin, that the *heart* is ſaid to be *deceitful above all things*, *Jer.* 17. 9. Take a man in other things, and as *Job* ſpeaks, though he *would be wiſe and crafty, he is like the wild Aſſes Colt*, *Job* 11. 12. a poor, vain, empty, nothing. But conſider his *heart* on the account of this Law of Sin, it is *crafty* and deceitful above all things, *They are wiſe to do evil*, ſaith the Prophet, but to do good they know not, *Jer.* 4. 22. To the ſame purpoſe ſpeaks the Apoſtle, Epheſ. 4. 2. *The old man is corrupt according to deceitful luſts.* Every luſt, which is a branch of this Law of Sin, is *deceitful*; and where there is poyſon in every ſtream, the Fountain muſt needs be corrupt. No particular luſt hath any *deceit* in it, but what is communicated unto it from this Fountain of all actual luſt, this *Law of Sin*. And (2 *Theſſ.* 2. 10.) the coming of the Man of Sin, is ſaid to be in and with the *deceivableneſs of unrighteouſneſs*. Unrighteouſneſs is a thing generally decryed and evil ſpoken of amongſt men, ſo that it is not eaſie to conceive how any man ſhould prevail himſelf of a reputation thereby. But there is a *deceivableneſs* in it, whereby the minds of men are turned aſide from a due conſideration of it, as we ſhall manifeſt afterwards. And thus the account which the Apoſtle gives concerning thoſe who are under the power of ſin is, that

that they are *deceived*, *Titus* 3. 3. And the life of evil men, is nothing but *deceiving and being deceived*, 2 *Tim.* 3. 13. So that we have ſufficient Teſtimony given unto this qualification of the *Enemy* with whom we have to deal; he is *deceitful*, which conſideration of all things puts the mind of man to a loſs in dealing with an Adverſary. He knows he can have no ſecurity againſt one that is *deceitful*, but in ſtanding upon his own guard and defence all his dayes.

Farther to manifeſt the ſtrength and advantage that ſin hath by its *deceit*, we may obſerve that the Scripture places it for the moſt part as the head and ſpring of every ſin, even as though there were no ſin *followed after*, but where *deceit* went before. So 1 *Tim.* 2. 13, 14. The reaſon the Apoſtle gives why *Adam* though he was *firſt formed*, was not *firſt in the tranſgreſſion*, is becauſe he was not *firſt deceived*. The Woman though made laſt, yet being *firſt deceived*, was firſt in the ſin. Even that firſt ſin began in deceit, and until the mind was *deceived*, the ſoul was ſafe. *Eve* therefore did truly expreſs the matter, *Gen.* 3. 13. though ſhe did it not to a good end; *the Serpent beguiled me*, ſaith ſhe, *and I did eat*. She thought to extenuate her own crime, by charging the *Serpent*. And this was a new fruit of the ſin ſhe had caſt her ſelf into. But the matter of fact was true, ſhe was *beguiled* before ſhe eat; deceit went before the tranſgreſſion. And the Apoſtle ſhews that Sin and Satan ſtill take the ſame courſe, 2 *Cor.* 11. 3. There is ſaith he, the ſame way of working towards actual ſin, as was of old; beguiling, deceiving goes before, and ſin that

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is the actual accompliſhment of it followeth after. Hence all the great works that the Devil doth in the world, to ſtir men up to an oppoſition unto the Lord Jeſus Chriſt and his Kingdom, he doth them by *deceit*, Rev. 12. 9. *The Devil who deceiveth the whole world.* It were utterly impoſſible men ſhould be prevailed on to abide in his ſervice, acting his deſigns to their eternal, and ſometimes their temporal ruine, were they not exceedingly *deceived.* See alſo *Chap.* 20. 10.

Hence are thoſe manifold Cautions that are given us to take heed, that *we be not deceived*, if we would take heed that we do not ſin. See *Eph.* 5. 6. 1 *Cor.* 6. 9. 1 *Cor.* 15. 33. *Gal.* 6. 7. *Luke* 21. 8. From all which teſtimonies we may learn the influence that *deceit* hath into *ſin*, and conſequently the advantage that the *Law of Sin* hath to put forth its power by its *deceitfulneſs.* Where it prevails to deceive, it fails not to bring forth its fruit.

The ground of this efficacy of ſin by deceit is taken from the *faculty of the ſoul* affected with it. Deceit properly affects the *mind*; it is the *mind* that is deceived. When ſin attempts any other way of entrance into the ſoul, as by the *Affections*, the mind retaining its right and Sovereignty, is able to give check and controul unto it. But where the mind is tainted, the prevalency muſt be great. For the *mind* or underſtanding is the leading faculty of the ſoul, and what that fixes on, the will and affections ruſh after, being capable of no conſideration but what that preſents unto them. Hence it is, that though the entanglement of the *Affections* unto ſin be oft-times moſt troubleſome,

yet

Yet the deceit of the *mind* is alwayes moſt dangerous; and that becauſe of the place that it poſſeſſeth in the ſoul, as unto all its operations. Its Office is to *guide*, *direct*, chooſe and lead; and if the light that is in us be darkneſs, how great is that darkneſs.

And this will farther appear, if we conſider the nature of *deceit* in general. It conſiſts in preſenting unto the ſoul, or mind, things *otherwiſe than they are*, either in their Nature, Cauſes, Effects, or preſent reſpect unto the ſoul. This is the general nature of *deceit*, and it prevails many wayes. It *hides* what ought to be ſeen and conſidered, conceals circumſtances and conſequences, preſents what is not, or things *as they are not*, as we ſhall afterwards manifeſt in particular. It was ſhewed before, that Satan beguiled and *deceived* our firſt Parents; that term the Holy Ghoſt gives unto his temptation and ſeduction. And how he did deceive them the Scripture relates, *Gen.* 3. 4, 5. He did it by repreſenting things *otherwiſe* than they were. The fruit was *deſirable*, that was apparent unto the eye. Hence Satan takes advantage ſecretly to inſinuate, that it was meerly an *abridgement* of their happineſs, that God aimed at in forbidding them to eat of it. That it was for a tryal of their obedience, that certain though not immediate ruine would enſue upon the eating of it, he *hides* from them; only he propoſeth the preſent advantage of knowledge, and ſo preſents the whole caſe quite otherwiſe unto them, than indeed it was. This is the nature of *deceit*; it is a Repreſentation of a matter under diſguiſes, hiding that which is

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undeſirable, propoſing that which indeed is not in it, that the mind may make a falſe judgment of it. So *Jacob* deceived *Iſaac* by his Brothers raiment, and the skins on his hands and neck.

Again, *Deceit* hath advantage by that way of management which is inſeparable from it. It is always carried on by *degrees*, by little and little, that the whole of the deſign and aim in hand be not at once diſcovered. So dealt *Satan* in that great *deceit* before-mentioned; he proceeds in it by ſteps and degrees. Firſt, He takes off an objection, and tells them *they ſhall not die*; then propoſeth *the good of knowledge to them*, and their being *like to God* thereby. To hide and conceal ends, to proceed by *ſteps* and degrees, to make uſe of what is obtained, and thence to preſs on to farther effects, is the true nature of deceit. *Steven* tells us, that the *King of Egypt dealt ſubtilly* or *deceitfully* with their *kindred*, *Acts* 7. 19. How he did it we may ſee, *Exod.* 1. he did not at firſt fall to *killing* and *ſlaying* of them, but ſays, *verſ.* 10. Come, let us *deal wiſely*, beginning to oppreſs them. This brings forth their *bondage*, *ver.* 11. Having got this ground to make them ſlaves, he proceeds to *deſtroy their children*, *ver.* 16. He fell not on them all at once, but by degrees. And this may ſuffice to ſhew in general, that ſin is *deceitful*, and the advantages that it hath thereby.

For the Way, and Manner, and Progreſs of ſin in working by *deceit*, we have it fully expreſſed, *James* 1. 14, 15. *Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own luſt and enticed, then when luſt hath conceived it bringeth forth ſin, and ſin when*

when it is finiſhed bringeth forth death. This place declaring the whole of what we aim at in this matter, muſt be particulary inſiſted on.

In the *foregoing verſe*, the Apoſtle manifeſts that men are willing to drive the *old trade*, which our firſt Parents at the entrance of ſin *ſet up* withall, namely of excuſing themſelves in their ſins, and caſting the occaſion and blame of them on others. It is not, ſay they, from themſelves, their own nature and inclinations, their own deſignings, that they have committed ſuch and ſuch evils, but meerly from their temptations. And if they know not where to fix the evil of thoſe temptations, they will lay them on God himſelf, rather than go without an excuſe or extenuation of their guilt. This evil in the hearts of men the Apoſtle rebuketh, *verſe* 13. *Let no man ſay when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted of evil, neither tempteth he any man.* And to ſhew the juſtneſs of this reproof in the words mentioned, he diſcovers the true cauſes of the riſe and whole progreſs of ſin, manifeſting that the whole *guilt* of it lies upon the *ſinner*, and that the whole *puniſhment* of it, if not graciouſly prevented, will be his lot alſo.

We have therefore, as was ſaid, in theſe words the whole progreſs of luſt or indwelling-ſin, by the way of ſubtilty, fraud and deceit, expreſſed and limited by the Holy Ghoſt. And from hence we ſhall manifeſt the particular ways and means whereby it puts forth its power and efficacy in the hearts of men by *deceitfulneſs* and ſubtilty; and we may obſerve in the words,

First,

Firſt, The utmoſt End aimed at in all the actings of ſin, or the tendency of it in its own nature, and that is *death*: *Sin when it is finiſhed bringeth forth death*; the everlaſting death of the ſinner: pretend what it will, this is the *end* it aims at and tends unto. Hiding of ends and deſigns, is the principal property of deceit. This ſin doth to the utmoſt; other things innumerable it pleads, but not once declares that it aims at the death, the everlaſting death of the ſoul. And a fixed apprehenſion of this *end* of every ſin, is a bleſſed means to prevent its prevalency in its way of deceit or beguiling.

Secondly, The general way of its acting towards that end, is by *Temptation*; *Every man is tempted of his own luſt.* I purpoſe not to ſpeak in general of the nature of *Temptations*, it belongs not unto our preſent purpoſe, and beſides I have done it elſewhere. It may ſuffice at preſent to obſerve, that the life of temptation lies in deceit. So that in the buſineſs of ſin, to be effectually *tempted*, and to be *beguiled* or *deceived*, are the ſame. Thus it was in the firſt temptation, it is every where called the Serpents beguiling or deceiving, as was manifeſted before: *The Serpent beguiled Eve*, that is, prevailed by his temptations upon her. So that every man is *tempted*, that is, every man is *beguiled* or deceived by his own luſt, or *indwelling-ſin*, which we have often declared to be the ſame.

The Degrees whereby ſin proceedeth in this work of *tempting* or *deceiving*, are *five*. For we ſhewed before, that this belongs unto the nature of deceit that it works by *degrees*, making its advantage by one ſtep to gain another. The

The firſt of theſe conſiſts in drawing off, or drawing away; *Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own luſt.*

The ſecond is in enticing; *and is enticed.*

The third, in the conception of ſin; *when luſt hath conceived*, when the heart is enticed, then luſt conceives in it.

The fourth is the bringing forth of ſin in its actual accompliſhment, *When luſt hath conceived it brings forth ſin.* In all which there is a ſecret alluſion to an adulterous deviation from conjugal duties, and conceiving or bringing forth children of whoredom and fornication.

The fifth is, the *finiſhing of ſin*, the compleating of it, the filling up of the meaſure of it, whereby the end originally deſigned by luſt is brought about: *Sin when it is finiſhed bringeth forth death.* As luſt conceiving, naturally and neceſſarily bringeth forth ſin, ſo ſin finiſhed, infallibly procureth eternal death.

The *firſt* of theſe relates to the *Mind*; that is drawn off, or drawn away by the deceit of ſin. The *ſecond* unto the *Affections*, they are enticed or intangled. The *third* to the *Will*, wherein ſin is conceived; the conſent of the Will being the formal conception of actual ſin. The *fourth* to the *Converſation*, wherein ſin is *brought forth*; it exerts it ſelf in the lives and courſes of men. The *fifth* reſpects an *obdurate courſe* in ſinning, that finiſheth, conſummates, and ſhuts up the whole work of ſin, whereon enſues *death* or eternal ruine.

I ſhall principally conſider the *three firſt*, wherein the main ſtength of the deceit of ſin doth lie, and that becauſe in *Believers*, whoſe ſtate and condition

is principally propoſed to conſideration, God is pleaſed, for the moſt part, graciouſly to prevent the *fourth inſtance*, or *the bringing forth of actual ſins* in their converſations; And the laſt alwaies and wholly, or their being obdurate in a courſe of ſin to the finiſhing of it. What waies God in his grace and faithfulneſs makes uſe of to *ſtifle the conceptions of ſin* in the womb, and to hinder its actual production in the lives of men, muſt afterwards be ſpoken unto. The *firſt three inſtances* then we ſhall inſiſt upon fully, as thoſe wherein the principal concernment of Believers in this matter doth lie.

The firſt thing which ſin is ſaid to do, working in a way of deceit, is to draw away, or to draw off; whence a man is ſaid to be *drawn off*, or *drawn away* and diverted, namely from *attending* unto that courſe of obedience and holineſs, which, in oppoſition unto ſin and the Law thereof, he is bound with diligence to attend unto.

Now it is the *Mind* that this effect of the *deceit* of ſin is wrought upon. The Mind or Underſtanding, as we have ſhewed, is the guiding, conducting faculty of the ſoul; it goes before in diſcerning, judging, and determining to make the way of moral actions fair and ſmooth to the Will and Affections. It is to the ſoul, what *Moſes* told his Father-in-law that he might be to the People in the Wilderneſs, as *eyes to guide them*, and keep them from wandering in that deſolate place. It is the *eye* of the ſoul, without whoſe guidance the Will and Affections would perpetually wander in the Wilderneſs of this world, according as any *object*, with an appearing *preſent Good*, did offer or preſent it ſelf unto them.

The

The firſt thing therefore that ſin aims at in its *deceitful working*, is to draw off and divert the mind from the diſcharge of its duty.

There are two things which belong unto the duty of the mind, in that *ſpecial office* which it hath in and about the obedience which God requireth.

Firſt, To keep it ſelf and the whole ſoul in ſuch a frame and poſture, as may render it ready unto all duties of obedience, and watchful againſt all inticements unto the conception of ſin.

Secondly, In particular carefully to attend unto all particular actions, that they be performed *as* God requireth, for matter, manner, time and ſeaſon, agreeable unto his Will, as alſo for the obviating all particular *tenders* of ſin in things forbidden. In theſe two things conſiſts the whole duty of the mind of a Believer. And from both of them doth *Indwelling-ſin* endeavour to divert it, and draw it off.

The firſt of theſe is, the duty of the mind, in reference unto the general frame and courſe of the whole ſoul; and hereof two things may be conſidered. Firſt, That it is founded in a due conſtant conſideration; 1. Of our ſelves, of ſin and its vileneſs. 2. Of God, of his grace and goodneſs. And both theſe doth ſin labour to draw it off from. Secondly, In attending to thoſe *Duties* which are ſuited to obviate the working of the Law of ſin, in an eſpecial manner.

Firſt, It endeavours to draw it off from a due conſideration, apprehenſion and ſenſibleneſs of its own *vileneſs*, and the danger wherewith it is attended. This in the firſt place we ſhall inſtance in.

A due conſtant conſideration of ſin in its nature, in all its aggravating circumſtances, in its end and tendency, eſpecially as repreſented in the Blood and Croſs of Chriſt ought alwaies to abide with us. *Jer.*2.19. *Know therefore and ſee, that it is an evil thing and a bitter, that thou haſt forſaken the Lord thy God.* Every ſin is a *forſaking* of the Lord our God. If the heart know not, if it conſider not, that it is an evil thing and a bitter, *evil* in it ſelf, *bitter* in its effects, fruit and event, it will never be ſecured againſt it. Beſides, that frame of heart which is moſt accepted with God in any ſinner, is the *humble*, contrite, ſelf-abaſing frame: *Iſa.*57.15. *Thus ſaith the high and lofty one that inhabiteth eternity, whoſe name is holy, I dwell in the high and holy place, with him alſo that is of a contrite and humble ſpirit: to revive the ſpirit of the humble, to revive the ſpirit of the contrite ones.* See alſo *Luk.*18.13, 14. This becomes a ſinner, no garment ſits ſo decently about him. *Be cloathed with humility*, ſaith the Apoſtle, 1 *Pet.* 5.5. It is that which becomes us, and it is the only ſafe frame. He that walketh humbly walketh ſafely. This is the deſign of *Peters* advice, 1 *Epiſt.* 1.17. *Paſs the time of your ſojourning here in fear.* After that he himſelf had miſcarried by another frame of mind, he gives this advice to all Believers; It is not a bondage, ſervile fear, diſquieting and perplexing the ſoul, but ſuch a fear as may keep men conſtantly *calling upon the Father*, with reference unto the final judgement, that they may be preſerved from ſin, whereof they were in ſo great danger, which he adviſes them unto. *If ye call on the Father, who without reſpect of perſons*

perſons judgeth according to every mans work, paſs the time of your ſojourning here in fear. This is the humble frame of ſoul; and how is this obtained? how is this preſerved? No otherwiſe but by a conſtant deep apprehenſion of the evil, vileneſs, and danger of ſin. So was it wrought, ſo was it kept up in the approved Publican: *God be merciful,* ſaith he, *to me a ſinner:* Senſe of ſin kept him humble, and humility made way for his acceſs unto a teſtimony of the pardon of ſin.

And this is the great *preſervative* through grace from ſin, as we have an example in the inſtance of *Joſeph, Gen.* 39. 9. Upon the urgency of his great temptation, he recoils immediately into this frame of ſpirit; How, ſaith he, can I do this thing, *and ſin againſt God?* A conſtant ſteady ſenſe of the evil of ſin, gives him ſuch preſervation, that he ventures Liberty and Life in oppoſition to it. To fear ſin, is to fear the Lord; ſo the holy man tells us that they are the ſame, *Job* 28. 28. *The fear of the Lord that is wiſdom, and to depart from iniquity that is underſtanding.*

This therefore in the firſt place, in general, doth the *Law of ſin* put forth its deceit about, namely to draw the *mind* from this frame, which is the ſtrongeſt fort of the ſouls defence and ſecurity. It labours to divert the mind from a due apprehenſion of the vileneſs, abomination, and danger of ſin. It ſecretly and inſenſibly inſinuates *leſſening,* excuſing, extenuating thoughts of it; or it draws it off from pondering upon it, from being converſant about it in its thoughts ſo much as it ought, and formerly hath been. And if after the

heart of a man hath through the Word, Spirit and Grace of Chriſt been made tender, ſoft, deeply ſenſible of ſin, it becomes on any account, or by any means whatever to have leſs, fewer, ſlighter, or leſs affecting thoughts of it, or about it, the mind of that man is *drawn away* by the *deceitfulneſs of ſin*.

There are two wayes amongſt others, whereby the Law of ſin endeavours *deceitfully* to draw off the mind from this duty, and frame enſuing thereon.

Firſt, It doth it by an horrible *abuſe of Goſpel-grace*. There is in the *Goſpel* a remedy provided againſt the whole evil of ſin, the filth, the guilt of it, with all its dangerous conſequents. It is the Doctrine of the deliverance of the ſouls of men from ſin and death. A diſcovery of the gracious will of God towards ſinners by Jeſus Chriſt. What now is the genuine tendency of this doctrine, of this diſcovery of grace, and what ought we to uſe it and improve it unto? This the Apoſtle declares, *Tit.* 2. 11, 12. *The grace of God that bringeth ſalvation, hath appeared to all men, teaching us, that denying ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, we ſhould live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in this preſent world.* This it teacheth, this we ought to learn of it, and by it. Hence *Univerſal holineſs* is called a *converſation that becometh the Goſpel*, Phil. 1. 27. It becomes it as that which is anſwerable unto its end, aim, and deſign, as that which it requires, and which it ought to be improved unto. And accordingly it doth produce this effect where the word of it is received and preſerved

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in a ſaving light, *Rom.* 12. 2. *Epheſ.*4.20,21,22, 23, 24. But herein doth the *deceit* of ſin interpoſe it ſelf. It ſeparates between the *Doctrine* of Grace, and the uſe and end of it. It ſtayes upon its notions, and intercepts its influences in its proper application. From the Doctrine of the *aſſured pardon* of ſin, it inſinuates a *regardleſneſs* of ſin. God in Chriſt makes the *propoſition*, and Satan and Sin make the *concluſion*. For that the *deceitfulneſs of ſin* is apt to plead unto a regardleſneſs of it from the grace of God whereby it is pardoned, the Apoſtle declares in his reproof and deteſtation of ſuch an inſinuation, *Rom.* 6. 1. *What ſhall we ſay then, ſhall we continue in ſin, that grace may abound? God forbid.* Mens deceitful hearts, ſaith he, are apt to make that concluſion; but far be it from us, that we ſhould give any entertainment unto it. But yet that ſome have evidently improved that deceit unto their own eternal ruine, *Jude* declares, *ver.*4. *Ungodly men, turning the grace of God into laſciviouſneſs.* And we have had dreadful inſtances of it in the daies of temptation wherein we have lived.

Indeed in oppoſition unto this deceit lies much of the *Wiſdom* of faith, and power of Goſpel-Grace. When the mind is fully poſſeſſed with, and caſt habitually and firmly into the mould of the notion and Doctrine of Goſpel-Truth about the full and free forgiveneſs of all ſins in the blood of Chriſt, then to be able to keep the heart alwaies in a deep humbling ſenſe of ſin, abhorrency of it, and ſelf-abaſement for it, is a great effect of Goſpel-Wiſdom and Grace. This is the

tryal and touchſtone of Goſpel-*Light*. If it keep the heart ſenſible of ſin, humble, lowly, and broken on that account; If it teach us to water a free pardon with tears, to deteſt forgiven ſin, to watch diligently for the ruine of that, which we are yet aſſured, ſhall never ruine us, it is *Divine*, from above, of the Spirit of Grace. If it ſecretly and inſenſibly make men looſe and *ſlight* in their thoughts about ſin, it is adulterate, ſelfiſh, falſe. If it will be all, anſwer all ends, it is nothing.

Hence it comes to paſs, that ſometimes we ſee men walking in a *bondage-frame of Spirit* all their daies, low in their light, mean in their apprehenſions of Grace, ſo that it is hard to diſcern whether Covenant in their Principles they belong unto; whether they are under the Law, or under Grace, yet walk with a more conſcientious tenderneſs of ſinning, than many who are advanced into higher degrees of light and knowledge than they. Not that the ſaving light of the Goſpel, is not the *only Principle* of ſaving holineſs and obedience; but that through the deceitfulneſs of ſin it is variouſly abuſed to countenance the ſoul in manifold neglect of duties, and to draw off the *mind* from a due conſideration of the nature, deſert and danger of ſin. And this is done ſeveral waies.

Firſt, The ſoul having frequent need of relief by Goſpel-Grace againſt a ſenſe of the guilt of ſin, and Accuſation of the Law, comes at length to make it a *common and ordinary thing*, and ſuch as may be ſlightly performed. Having found a good medicine for its wounds, and ſuch as it hath had experience of its efficacy, it comes to apply it *ſlightly*,

ſlightly, and rather skinneth over, than cureth it's ſores. A little leſs earneſtneſs, a little leſs diligence ſerves every time, until the ſoul it may be begins to ſecure it ſelf of *pardom in courſe*. And this tends directly to *draw off the mind* from its conſtant and univerſal watchfulneſs againſt ſin. He whoſe light hath made his way of acceſs plain for the obtaining of pardon, if he be not very watchful, he is far more apt to become overly, formal, and careleſs in his work, than he who by reaſon of *miſts* and *darkneſs*, beats about to find his way aright to the Throne of Grace. As a Man that hath often travelled a Road paſſed on without regard or enquiry; but he who is a ſtranger unto it obſerving all turnings, and enquiring of all Paſſengers, ſecures his Journey beyond the other.

Secondly, The *deceitfulneſs of ſin* takes advantage from the *Doctrine of Grace*, by many waies and means to extend the bounds of the ſouls liberty beyond what God hath aſſigned unto it. Some have never thought themſelves free from a legal bondage-frame, until they have been brought into the *confines* of ſenſuality, and ſome into the *depths* of it. How often will ſin plead, this ſtrictneſs, this exactneſs, this ſolicitude is no waies needful; relief is provided in the Goſpel againſt ſuch things. Would you live as though there were no need of the Goſpel? as though pardon of ſin were to no purpoſe? But concerning theſe pleas of ſin from Goſpel-Grace, we ſhall have occaſion to ſpeak more hereafter in particular.

Thirdly, In times of *temptation* this deceitfulneſs of ſin, will argue expreſly *for ſin* from Goſpel-Grace;

Grace; at leaſt it will plead for theſe two things.

Firſt, That there is not need of ſuch a tenacious ſevere contending againſt it, as the principle of the *new Creature* is fixed on. If it cannot divert the ſoul or mind *wholly* from attending unto temptations to oppoſe them, yet it will endeavour to draw them off, as to the *manner* of their attendance. They need not uſe that diligence which at firſt the ſoul apprehends to be neceſſary.

Secondly, It will be tendering relief as to the event of ſin, that it ſhall not turn to the ruine or deſtruction of the ſoul, becauſe it is, it will, or may be pardoned by the Grace of the Goſpel. And this is true, this is the great and only relief of the ſoul againſt ſin, the guilt whereof it hath contracted already; the bleſſed and only remedy for a guilty ſoul. But when it is pleaded and remembred by the deceitfulneſs of ſin in complyance with temptation unto ſin, then it is *poyſon*; poyſon is mixed in every drop of this balſom, to the danger, if not death of the ſoul. And this is the firſt way whereby the *deceitfulneſs of ſin* draws off the mind from a due attendance unto that ſenſe of its vileneſs, which alone is able to keep it in that humble, ſelf-abaſed frame that is acceptable with God. It makes the *mind* careleſs, as though its work were needleſs, becauſe of the abounding of Grace; which is a Souldiers neglect of his ſtation truſting to a reſerve, provided indeed only in caſe of keeping his own proper place.

Secondly, Sin takes advantage to work by its deceit

deceit in this matter of *drawing off the mind* from a due ſenſe of it, from the ſtate and condition of men in the world. I ſhall give only one inſtance of its procedure in this kind. Men in their younger daies have naturally their affections more quick, vigorous and active, more ſenſibly working in them, than afterwards. They do as to their ſenſible working and operation *naturally* decay, and many things befall men in their lives, that take off the edge and keenneſs of them. But as men loſe in their Affections, if they are not beſotted in ſenſuality, or by the corruptions that are in the world through luſt, they grow and improve in their Underſtandings, Reſolutions, and Judgements. Hence it is, that if what had place formerly in their *Affections*, do not take place in their *minds* and *judgements*, they utterly loſe them, they have no more place in their ſouls. Thus men have no regard for, yea, they utterly deſpiſe thoſe things which their Affections were ſet upon with delight and greedineſs in their Childhood. But if they are things that by any means come to be fixed in their Minds and Judgements, they continue a high eſteem for them, and do cleave as cloſe unto them, as they did when their Affections were more vigorous. Only as it were they have changed their ſeat in the ſoul. It is thus in things ſpiritual; the firſt and chiefeſt ſeat of the ſenſibleneſs of ſin, is in the *Affections*; as theſe in natural youth, are great and large, ſo are they ſpiritually in ſpiritual youth, *Jer.* 2. 2. *I remember the kindneſs of thy youth, the love of thine eſpouſals.* Beſides ſuch Perſons are newly come off from their convictions, wherein

wherein they have been cut to the heart, and ſo made tender. Whatever touches upon a wound is throughly felt. So doth the guilt of ſin before the wound given by conviction be throughly cured. But now when affections begin to decay naturally, they begin to decay alſo as to their ſenſible actings and motions in things ſpiritual. Although they improve in Grace, yet they may decay in ſenſe. At leaſt ſpiritual ſenſe is not *radically* in them, but only by way of communication. Now in theſe decayes, if the ſoul take not care to fix a deep ſenſe of Sin on the *Mind and Judgement*, thereby perpetually to affect the heart and affections, it will decay. And here the deceit of the Law of Sin interpoſeth it ſelf. It ſuffers a ſenſe of ſin to decay in the Affections, and diverts the mind from entertaining a due, conſtant fixed conſideration of it. We may conſider this a little in perſons that never make a progreſs in the waies of God beyond conviction. How *ſenſible* of ſin will they be for a ſeaſon? How will they then mourn and weep under a ſenſe of the guilt of it? How will they cordially and heartily reſolve againſt it? Affections are vigorous, and as it were bear rule in their ſouls. But they are like an herb that will flouriſh for a day or two with watering, although it have no root. For, a while after we ſee, that theſe men the more experience they have had of ſin, the leſs they are afraid of it, as the Wiſe Man intimates, *Eccleſ.* 8.11. And at length they come to be the greateſt contemners of ſin in the world. No ſinner like him that hath ſinned away his convictions of ſin. What is the reaſon

reaſon of this? ſenſe of ſin was in their convictions fixed on their Affections; as it decayed in them, they took no care to have it deeply and graciouſly fixed on their minds. This the deceitfulneſs of ſin deprived them of, and ſo ruined their ſouls. In ſome meaſure it is ſo with Believers. If as the ſenſibleneſs of the Affections decay, if as they grow heavy and obtuſe, great Wiſdom and Grace be not uſed to fix a due ſenſe of ſin upon the mind and judgement, which may provoke, excite, enliven and ſtir up the Affections every day, great decayes will enſue. At firſt, ſorrow, trouble, grief, fear, affected the mind, and would give it no reſt. If afterwards the mind do not affect the heart with ſorrow and grief, the whole will be caſt out, and the ſoul be in danger of being hardened. And theſe are ſome of the waies whereby the *deceit of ſin* diverts the mind from the firſt part of its ſafe preſerving frame, or draws it off from its conſtant watchfulneſs againſt ſin and all the effects of it.

The ſecond *Part* of this general duty of the mind, is to keep the ſoul unto a conſtant, holy conſideration of God and his Grace. This evidently lies at the Spring-head of Goſpel-obedience. The way whereby ſin draws off the *mind* from this part of its duty is open and known ſufficiently, though not ſufficiently watched againſt. Now this the Scripture every where declares to be the filling of the minds of men *with earthly things.* This it placeth in direct oppoſition unto that *Heavenly frame* of the mind, which is the ſpring of Goſpel-obedience, *Col.* 3. 2. *Set your Affections on things above,*

above, not on things on the earth, or ſet your minds. As if he had ſaid, on both together you cannot be ſet or fixed, ſo as principally and chiefly to mind them both. And the Affections to the one and the other, proceeding from theſe different principles of *minding* the one and the other, are oppoſed as directly inconſiſtent, 1 *Joh.*2.15. *Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world, if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.* And actings in a courſe ſuitable unto theſe Affections are propoſed alſo as contrary; *you cannot ſerve God and Mammon.* Theſe are two Maſters whom no man can ſerve at the ſame time, to the ſatisfaction of both. Every *inordinate minding*, then, of earthly things, is oppoſed unto that frame wherein our minds ought to be fixed on God and his Grace in a courſe of Goſpel-obedience.

Several wáies there are whereby the *deceitfulneſs of ſin* draws off the mind in this particular, but the chief of them is by preſſing theſe things on the mind under the notion of things *lawful*, and it may be neceſſary. So all thoſe who excuſe themſelves in the *Parable*, from coming in to the Marriage-Feaſt of the Goſpel, did it on the account of their being engaged in their *lawful* Callings. One about his *Farm*, another his *Oxen*, the means whereby he ploughed in this world. By this plea were the minds of men drawn off from that frame of Heavenlineſs which is required to our walking with God, and the rules of not loving the world, or uſing it as if we uſed it not, are hereby neglected. What wiſdom, what watchfulneſs, what ſerious

frequent

frequent trial and examination of our ſelves is required, to keep our hearts and minds in an heavenly frame, in the uſe and purſuit of earthly things, is not my preſent buſineſs to declare. This is evident, that the engine whereby the deceit of ſin *draws off* and turns aſide the mind in this matter, is the pretence of the *lawfulneſs* of things about which it would have it exerciſe it ſelf, againſt which very few are armed with ſufficient diligence, wiſdom and skill. And this is the firſt and moſt general attempt that *indwelling-ſin* makes upon the ſoul by *deceit*: It draws away the mind from a diligent attention unto its courſe in a due ſenſe of the evil of ſin, and a due and conſtant conſideration of God and his Grace.

CHAP. IX.

The deceit of Sin in drawing off the mind from a due attendance unto eſpecial Duties of Obedience, inſtanced in Meditation and Prayer.

HOw ſin by its *deceit* endeavours to draw off the mind from attending unto that holy frame in walking with God, wherein the ſoul ought to be preſerved, hath been declared. Proceed we now to ſhew how it doth the ſame work in reference unto thoſe *eſpecial duties*, by which the deſigns, workings and prevalency of it may in an eſpecial manner be obviated and prevented.

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Sin indeed maintains an enmity againſt all duties of obedience, or rather with God in them. *When I would do good*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *evil is preſent with me*. When ever I would do good, or what good ſoever I would do, that is ſpiritually good, good in reference unto God, it is preſent with me, to hinder me from it, to oppoſe me in it. And on the other ſide, all duties of obedience do lie directly againſt the actings of the Law of ſin. For as the *fleſh* in all its actings *luſteth* againſt the ſpirit, ſo the *ſpirit* in all its actings *luſteth* againſt the fleſh. And therefore every duty performed in the ſtrength and grace of the Spirit, is contrary to the Law of ſin. *Rom.* 8. 13. *If ye by the Spirit do mortifie the deeds of the fleſh*. Actings of the Spirit of grace in duties doth this work. Theſe two are contrary. But yet there are *ſome duties*, which in their own nature, and by Gods appointment, have a peculiar influence into the weakening and ſubduing the whole law of ſin in its very principles, and chiefeſt ſtrengths. And theſe the mind of a *Believer* ought *principally* in his whole courſe to attend unto. And theſe doth ſin in its deceit endeavour *principally* to draw off the *mind* from. As in diſeaſes of the body, ſome remedies, they ſay, have a ſpecifick quality againſt diſtempers; ſo in this diſeaſe of the ſoul, there are ſome duties that have an *eſpecial vertue* againſt this ſinful diſtemper. I ſhall not inſiſt on many of them, but inſtance only in two, which ſeem to me to be of this nature; namely that by Gods deſignation they have a ſpecial tendency towards the ruine of the *Law of ſin*. And then we ſhall ſhew the waies, methods and means which

which the *Law of ſin* uſeth to divert the mind from a due attendance unto them. Now theſe duties are, firſt, *Prayer*, eſpecially private prayer: and, ſecondly, *Meditation*. I put them together, becauſe they much agree in their general nature and end, differing only in the manner of their performance. For by *Meditation*, I intend meditating upon what reſpect and ſuitableneſs there is between the *Word* and our own *hearts*, to this end, that they may be brought to a more exact conformity. It is our pondering on the truth as it is in *Jeſus*, to find out the image and repreſentation of it in our own hearts; and ſo it hath the ſame intent with Prayer, which is to bring our ſouls into a frame in all things anſwering the mind and will of God. They are as the blood and ſpirits in the veins, that have the ſame life, motion and uſe. But yet becauſe perſons are generally at a great loſs in this duty of *Meditation*, having declared it to be of ſo great efficacy, for the controlling of the actings of the *Law of ſin*, I ſhall in our paſſage give briefly two or three rules for the directing of *Believers* to a right performance of this great duty, and they are theſe.

Firſt, *Meditate of God with God*; that is, when we would undertake thoughts and *meditations* of God, his Excellencies, his Properties, his Glory, his Majeſty, his Love, his Goodneſs, let it be done in a way of *ſpeaking unto God*, in a deep humiliation and abaſement of our ſouls before him. This will fix the mind, and draw it forth from one thing to another, to give glory unto God in a due manner, and affect the ſoul until it be brought

into that holy admiration of God and delight in him, which is acceptable unto him. My meaning is, that it be done in a way of *Prayer* and *Praiſe*, ſpeaking unto God.

Secondly, *Meditate on the Word in the Word*: that is, in the reading of it, conſider the ſenſe in the particular paſſages we inſiſt upon, looking to God for help, guidance and direction in the diſcovery of his mind and will therein, and then labour to have our hearts affected with it.

Thirdly, What we come ſhort of in evenneſs and conſtancy in our thoughts in theſe things, let it be made up in frequency. Some are diſcouraged becauſe their minds do not regularly ſupply them with thoughts to carry on their *meditations*, through the weakneſs or imperfection of their inventions. Let this be ſupplied by *frequent* returns of the mind unto the ſubject propoſed to be meditated upon, whereby new ſenſes will ſtill be ſupplied unto it. But this by the way.

Theſe duties, I ſay, amongſt others (for we have only choſen them for an inſtance, not excluding ſome others from the ſame place, office and uſefulneſs with them) do make an *eſpecial oppoſition* to the very being and life of Indwelling-ſin, or rather *faith* in them doth ſo. They are perpetually deſigning its utter ruine. I ſhall therefore upon this *inſtance* in the purſuit of our preſent purpoſe do theſe two things.

Firſt, Shew the ſuitableneſs and *uſefulneſs* of this duty, or theſe duties, (as I ſhall handle them jointly) unto the ruining of ſin.

Secondly, Shew the *means* whereby the deceitfulneſs

fulneſs of ſin endeavours to *draw off the mind* from a due attendance unto them.

For the firſt obſerve,

Firſt, That it is the proper work of the ſoul in this duty, to conſider all the *ſecret workings* and actings of ſin, what advantages it hath got, what temptations it is in conjunction withall, what harm it hath already done, and what it is yet farther ready to do. Hence *David* gives that title unto one of his Prayers, *Pſal.* 102. *A prayer of the afflicted, when he is over-whelmed, and poureth out his complaint before the Lord.* I ſpeak of that prayer which is attended with a due conſideration of all the wants, ſtraits and emergencies of the ſoul. Without this, Prayer is not Prayer; that is, whatever ſhew or appearance of that duty it hath, it is no way uſeful, either to the glory of God, or the good of the ſouls of men. A cloud it is without water, driven by the wind of the breath of men. Nor was there ever any more preſent and effectual poiſon for ſouls found out, than the binding of them unto a conſtant form and uſage of I know not what words in their prayers and ſupplications, which themſelves do not underſtand. Bind men ſo in their trades, or in their buſineſſes in this world, and they will quickly find the effect of it. By this means are they diſenabled from any due conſideration of what at preſent is good for them, or evil unto them, without which, to what uſe can prayer ſerve, but to mock God, and delude mens own ſouls? But in this kind of Prayer which we inſiſt on, the Spirit of God falls in to give us his aſſiſtance, and that in this very matter of *finding out* and

discovering the most secret actings and workings of the Law of sin. *Rom.* 8. 26. *We know not what to pray for as we ought, but he helps our infirmities:* he discovers our wants unto us, and wherein chiefly we stand in need of help and relief. And we find it by daily experience, that in prayer, Believers are led into such discoveries and convictions of the secret deceitful work of sin in their hearts, as no considerations could ever have led them into. So *David*, *Psal.* 51. designing the confession of his actual sin, having his wound in his prayer searched by the skilful hand of the Spirit of God, he had a discovery made unto him of the root of all his miscarriages in his *original corruption*, *vers.* 5. The Spirit in this duty is as the *candle of the Lord* unto the soul, enabling it to search all the inward parts of the belly. It gives a holy spiritual light into the mind, enabling it to search the deep and dark recesses of the heart, to find out the subtil and deceitful machinations, figments and imaginations of the Law of sin therein. What ever notion there be of it, what ever power and prevalency in it, it is laid hand on, apprehended, brought into the presence of God, judged, condemned, bewailed. And what can possible be more effectual for its ruine and destruction? For together with its discovery, application is made unto all that relief which in Jesus Christ is provided against it, all ways and means whereby it may be ruined. Hence it is the duty of the mind, *to watch unto prayer*, 1 *Pet.* 4. 7. To attend diligently unto the estate of our souls, and to deal fervently and effectually with God about it. The like also may be said of

Meditation,

Meditation, wiſely managed unto its proper end.

Secondly, In this duty there is wrought upon the heart a deep full ſenſe of the *vileneſs of ſin*, with a conſtant renewed deteſtation of it, which, if any thing, undoubtedly tends to its ruine. This is one deſign of prayer, one end of the ſoul in it, namely to draw forth ſin, to ſet it in order, to preſent it unto it ſelf in its vileneſs, abomination and aggravating circumſtances, that it may be loathed, abhorred, and caſt away as a filthy thing; as *Iſa.* 30. 22. He that pleads with God for ſins remiſſion, pleads alſo with his own heart for its deteſtation. *Hoſ.* 14. 3. Herein alſo ſin is *judged* in the Name of God; for the ſoul in its confeſſion ſubſcribes unto Gods deteſtation of it, and the ſentence of his Law againſt it. There is indeed a *courſe* of theſe duties, which convinced perſons do give up themſelves unto, as a mere covert to their luſts: they cannot ſin quietly, unleſs they perform duty conſtantly. But that Prayer we ſpeak of, is a thing of another nature, a thing that will allow no compoſition with ſin, much leſs will ſerve the ends of the deceit of it, as the other formal prayer doth. It will not be *bribed* into a ſecret compliance with any of the enemies of God, or the ſoul, no not for a moment. And hence it is, that oftentimes in this duty, the heart is raiſed to the moſt ſincere effectual ſenſe of ſin, and deteſtation of it, that the ſoul ever obtains in its whole courſe of obedience. And this evidently tends alſo to the *weakning* and ruine of the Law of ſin.

Thirdly, This is the way appointed and bleſſ'd of God to obtain ſtrength and power againſt

ſin. *Jam.* 1. 5. *Doth any man lack, let him ask of God.* Prayer is the way of obtaining from God by Chriſt a ſupply of all our wants, aſſiſtance againſt all oppoſition, eſpecially that which is made againſt us by ſin. This, I ſuppoſe, need not be inſiſted on; it is in the notion and practice clear to every Believer. It is that wherein we *call*, and upon which the Lord Jeſus comes in to our *ſuccour*, with ſuitable help in a time of need, *Heb.* 2. 17.

Fourthly, Faith in Prayer *countermines* all the workings of the deceit of ſin; and that becauſe the ſoul doth therein conſtantly engage it ſelf unto God to oppoſe all ſin whatſoever. *Pſal.* 119. 106. *I have ſworn, and I will perfom it, that I will keep thy righteous judgments.* This is the language of every gracious ſoul in its addreſſes unto God: the inmoſt parts thereof engage themſelves to God to cleave to him in all things, and to oppoſe ſin in all things. He that cannot do this, cannot pray. To pray with any other frame, is to flatter God with our lips, which he abhorreth. And this exceedingly helps a Believer in *purſuing ſin* unto its ruine. For,

Firſt, If there be any ſecret luſt that lies lurking in the heart, he will find it either riſing up againſt this engagement, or uſing its *artifices* to ſecure it ſelf from it. And hereby it is diſcovered; and the conviction of the heart concerning its evil furthered and ſtrengthened. Sin makes the moſt certain *diſcovery* of it ſelf, and never more evidently than when it is moſt ſeverely purſued. Luſts in men are compared to hurtful and *noiſome beaſts*, or men themſelves are ſo becauſe of their luſts,

Iſa.

Isa. 11. 4, 5. Now such beasts use themselves to their dens and coverts, and never discover themselves, at least so much in their proper nature and rage, as when they are most *earnestly pursued*. And so it is with sin and corruption in the heart.

Secondly, If any sin be *prevalent* in the soul, it will weaken it, and take it off from the *universality* of this engagement unto God, it will breed a *tergiversation* unto it, a slightness in it. Now when this is observed, it will exceedingly awaken a gracious soul, and stir it up to look about it. As a *spontaneous lassitude*, or a causeless weariness and indisposition of the body, is looked on as the sign of an approaching Feaver, or some dangerous distemper, which stirs up men to use a timely and vigorous prevention, that they be not seised upon by it; so is it in this case. When the soul of a Believer finds in it self an *indisposition* to make fervent, sincere engagements of universal holiness unto God, it knows that there is some prevalent distemper in it, finds the place of it, and sets it self against it.

Thirdly, Whilst the soul can thus constantly engage it self unto God, it is certain that sin can rise unto no *ruinous prevalency*. Yea, it is a *conquest* over sin, a most considerable conquest, when the soul doth fully and clearly, without any secret reserve, come off with alacrity and resolution in such an engagement; as *Psal.* 18. 23. And it may upon such a success triumph in the grace of God, and have good hope through faith, that it shall have a final conquest, and what it so resolves, shall be done; that it hath decreed a thing, and it shall be

eſtabliſhed. And this tends to the diſappointment, yea, to the ruine of the Law of ſin.

Fourthly, If the heart be not deceived by curſed *hypocriſie*, this engagement unto God will greatly influence it unto a peculiar diligence and watchfulneſs againſt all ſin. There is no greater evidence of hypocriſie, than to have the heart like the *whoriſh woman*, *Prov.* 7. 14. to ſay, *I have paid my vows, now I may take my ſelf unto my ſin.* Or to be *negligent* about ſin, as being *ſatisfied* that it hath prayed againſt it. It is otherwiſe in a gracious ſoul. Senſe and conſcience of engagements againſt ſin made to God, do make it univerſally watchful againſt all its motions and operations. On theſe and ſundry other accounts, doth faith in this duty exert it ſelf peculiary, to the weakening of the power, and ſtopping of the progreſs of the Law of ſin.

If then the mind be *diligent* in its watch and charge, to preſerve the ſoul from the efficacy of ſin, it will carefully attend unto this duty, and the due performance of it, which is of ſuch ſingular advantage unto its end and purpoſe. Here therefore ſin puts forth its deceit in its own defence: it labours to divert and draw off the mind from attending unto this and the like duties. And there are, among others, *three engines*, three ways and means, whereby it attempts the accompliſhment of its deſign.

Firſt, It makes advantage of its wearineſs unto the fleſh. There is an *Averſation*, as hath been declared in the Law of Sin unto all immediate communion with God. Now this duty is ſuch. There

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is nothing accompanieth it whereby the carnal part of the ſoul may be gratified, or ſatisfied, as there may be ſomewhat of that nature in moſt *publick duties*, in moſt that a man can do, beyond pure acts of faith and love. No relief or advantage then coming in by it, but what is purely ſpiritual, it becomes weariſome, burdenſome to fleſh and blood. It is like travelling alone without Companion or diverſion, which makes the way ſeem long, but brings the Paſſenger with moſt ſpeed to his journeys end. So our Saviour declares, when expecting his *Diſciples* according to their duty and preſent diſtreſs ſhould have been engaged in this work, he found them *faſt aſleep*, Matth. 26. 41. *The Spirit*, ſaith he, *indeed is willing*, *but the fleſh is weak*: And out of that weakneſs grew their indiſpoſition unto, and wearineſs of their Duty. So God complains of his People, Iſa. 43. 22. *Thou haſt been weary of me*. And it may come at length unto that height which is mentioned, Mal. 1. 13. *Ye have ſaid*, *behold what a wearineſs is it*, *and ye have ſnuffed at it*, *ſaith the Lord of Hoſts*. The *Jews* ſuppoſe that it was the language of men when they brought their Offerings or Sacrifices on their ſhoulders, which they pretended *wearyed* them, and they panted and blowed as men ready to faint under them, when they brought only the torn, and the lame, and the ſick. But ſo is this duty oftentimes to the fleſh. And this the deceitfulneſs of ſin makes uſe of, to draw the heart by inſenſible degrees from a conſtant attendance unto it. It puts in for the relief of the weak and weary fleſh. There is a com-

complyance between *ſpiritual fleſh*, and *natural fleſh* in this matter; they help one another, and an averſation unto this duty is the effect of their complyance. So it was in the *Spouſe*, *Cant.* 5. 2, 3. She was aſleep drowſing in her *ſpiritual condition*, and pleads her *natural unfitneſs* to rouſe her ſelf from that ſtate. If the mind be not diligently watchful to prevent inſinuations from hence, if it dwell not conſtantly on thoſe conſiderations which evidence an attendance unto this duty to be indiſpenſible, if it ſtir not up the principle of Grace in the heart to retain its Rule and Soveraignty, and not to be dallied withal by fooliſh pretences, it will be *drawn* off, which is the effect aimed at.

Secondly, The deceitfulneſs of ſin makes uſe of corrupt reaſonings taken from the preſſing and urging *occaſions of life*. Should we, ſayes it in the heart, attend ſtrictly unto all duties in this kind, we ſhould neglect our principal occaſions, and be *uſeleſs* unto our ſelves and others in the world. And on this general account, particular *buſineſſes* diſpoſſeſs particular *duties* from their due place and time. Men have not leiſure to glorifie God and ſave their own ſouls. It is certain, that God gives us time enough for all that he requires of us in any kind in this world. No duties need to *juſtle* one another, I mean conſtantly. Eſpecial occaſions muſt be determined according unto eſpecial circumſtances. But if in any thing we take more upon us than we have time well to perform it in without robbing God of that which is due to him, and our own ſouls, this God calls not unto, this he bleſſeth

bleſſeth us not in. It is more tolerable that our duties of holineſs and regard to God, ſhould intrench upon the duties of our Callings and employments in this world, than on the contrary; and yet neither doth God require this at our hands in an ordinary manner or courſe. How little then will he bear with that which evidently is ſo much worſe upon all accounts whatever. But yet through the deceitfulneſs of ſin, thus are the ſouls of men beguiled. By ſeveral degrees they are at length driven from their duty.

Thirdly, It deals with the mind to draw it off from its attendance unto this duty by a tender of a *compenſation* to be made in and by other duties. As *Saul* thought to compenſate his diſobedience by Sacrifice. *May not the ſame duty performed in publick, or in the Family ſuffice?* And if the ſoul be ſo fooliſh as not to anſwer, *thoſe things ought to be done, and this not to be left undone*, it may be enſnared and deceived. For beſides a command unto it, namely, that we ſhould perſonally watch unto prayer, there is as hath been declared ſundry advantages in this duty ſo performed againſt the deceit and efficacy of ſin, which in the more publick attendance unto it, it hath not. Theſe ſin ſtrives to deprive the ſoul of by this commutation which by its corrupt reaſonings it tenders unto it.

Fourthly, I may add here that which hath place in all the workings of ſin by *deceit*, namely, its feeding the ſoul with *promiſes* and purpoſes of a more diligent attendance unto this duty when occaſions will permit. By this means it brings the ſoul to ſay unto its convictions of duty, as *Felix* did

did to *Paul*, *Go thy way for this time, when I have a convenient ſeaſon, I will call for thee.* And by this means oftentimes the preſent ſeaſon and time, which alone is ours, is loſt irrecoverably.

Theſe are ſome of the wayes and means whereby the *deceit of ſin* endeavours to *draw off the mind* from its due attendance unto this duty, which is ſo peculiarly ſuited to prevent its progreſs and prevalency, and which aims ſo directly and immediately at its ruine. I might inſtance alſo in other duties of the like tendency. But this may ſuffice to diſcover the nature of this part of the deceit of ſin. And this is the firſt way whereby it makes way for the farther entangling of the *Affections* and the conception of ſin. When ſin hath wrought this effect on any one, he is ſaid to be *drawn away*, to be diverted from what in his mind he ought conſtantly to attend unto, in his walking before the Lord.

And this will inſtruct us to ſee and diſcern where lyes the beginning of our declenſions and failings in the wayes of God, and that either as to our general courſe, or as to our attendance unto eſpecial duties. And this is of great importance and concernment unto us. When the beginnings and occaſions of a *ſickneſs* or diſtemper of body are known, it is a great advantage to direct in and unto the cure of it. God to recall *Sion* to himſelf ſhews her where was the *beginning* of her *ſin*, *Micah* 1. 13. Now this is that which for the moſt part is the *beginning of ſin* unto us, even the drawing off the mind from a due attendance in all things unto the diſcharge of its duty. The principal

cipal care and charge of the ſoul lyes on the mind; and if that fail of its duty, the whole is betrayed, either as unto its general frame, or as unto particular miſcarriages. The failing of the mind, is like the failing of the *Watch-man* in *Ezekiel*, the whole is loſt by his neglect. This therefore in that *ſelf-ſcrutiny* and ſearch which we are called unto, we are moſt diligently to enquire after. God doth not look at what duties we perform, as to their number and tale, or as to their nature meerly, but whether we do them with that intention of mind and Spirit which he requireth. Many men perform duties in a *road* or courſe, and do not as it were, ſo much as think of them. Their minds are filled with other things, only duty takes up ſo much of their time. This is but an endeavour to mock God, and deceive their own ſouls. Would you therefore take the true meaſure of your ſelves: conſider how it is with you as to the duty of your minds which we have enquired after. Conſider whether by any of the deceits mentioned, you have not been *diverted and drawn away*; and if there be any decayes upon you in any kind, you will find that there hath been the beginning of them. By one way or other your *minds* have been made heedleſs, regardleſs, ſlothful, uncertain, being beguiled and drawn off from their duty. Conſider the charge, *Prov.* 4. 23, 25, 26, 27. May not ſuch a ſoul ſay, if I had attended more diligently, if I had conſidered more wiſely the vile nature of ſin, if I had not ſuffered my mind to be poſſeſſed with vain hopes and fooliſh imaginations, by a curſed abuſe of Goſpel-Grace,

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If I had not permitted it to be filled with the things of the world, and to become negligent in attending unto especial duties, I had not at this day been thus sick, weak, thriftless, wounded, decayed, defiled. My careless, my deceived mind, hath been the *beginning of sin* and transgression unto my soul. And this discovery will direct the soul unto a suitable way for its healing and recovery, which will never be effected by a multiplying of particular duties, but by a restoring of the mind, *Psal.* 23. 3.

And this also doth hence appear to be the great means of preserving our souls, both as unto their general frame and particular duties according to the mind and will of God; namely to endeavour after a sound and stedfast mind. It is a signal Grace to have the Spirit of power and love, and of a sound mind; 2 *Tim.* 1. 7. A stable, solid, resolved mind in the things of God, not easily moved, diverted, changed, not drawn aside, a mind not apt to hearken after corrupt reasonings, vain insinuations, or pretences to draw it off from its duty. This is that which the Apostle exhorts Believers unto, 1 Cor. 15. 38. *Therefore my beloved Brethren, be stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.* The *stedfastness* of our minds abiding in their duty, is the cause of all our *unmoveableness*, and fruitfulness in obedience. And so *Peter* tells us that those who are by any means led away, or *enticed, they fall from their own stedfastness*, 2 *Pet.* 3. 7. And the great blame that is laid upon Backsliders is, that they are *not stedfast*, *Psal.* 78. 37. *Their Spirit was not stedfast.* For if the soul

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be ſafe, unleſs the mind be drawn off from its duty, the ſoundneſs and ſtedfaſtneſs of the mind is its great preſervative. And there are three parts of this ſtedfaſtneſs of the mind, Firſt, A full purpoſe of cleaving to God in all things. Secondly, A daily renovation and quickning of the heart unto a diſcharge of this purpoſe. Thirdly, Reſolutions againſt all dalliances or parlies about negligencies in that diſcharge; which are not here to be ſpoken unto.

CHAP. X.

The Deceit of Sin in drawing off the Mind from its Attendance unto particular Duties farther diſcovered. Several things required in the Mind of Believers with reſpect unto particular Duties of Obedience. The Actings of Sin in a way of Deceit, to divert the mind from them.

WE have not as yet brought unto an Iſſue the *Firſt way* of the working of the deceit of ſin, namely, in its *drawing away of the mind* from the diſcharge of its duty, which we inſiſt upon the longer upon a double account.

Firſt, Becauſe of its importance and concernment. If the mind be drawn off, if it be tainted, weakned, turned aſide from a due and ſtrict attendance unto its charge and Office, the whole Soul, Will, and Affections, are certainly entangled and drawn into

into ſin, as hath been in part declared, and will afterwards farther appear. This we ought therefore to give diligent heed unto, which is the deſign of the Apoſtles Exhortation, Heb. 2. 1. *Therefore we ought to give the more earneſt heed to the things which we have heard, leſt at any time we ſhould let them ſlip.* It is a failure of our minds, by the deceitfulneſs of ſin, in loſing the life, power, ſenſe and impreſſion of the *Word* which he cautions us againſt. And there is no way to prevent it but by giving of moſt *earneſt heed* unto the things which we have heard, which expreſſeth the whole duty of our minds in attending unto obedience.

Secondly, Becauſe the actings and workings of the *mind* being ſpiritual, are ſuch as the *conſcience* unleſs clearly enlightened, and duly excited and ſtirred up, is not affected withal, ſo as to take due notice of them. Conſcience is not apt to exerciſe reflex acts upon the minds failures, as principally reſpecting the acts of the whole ſoul. When the *Affections* are entangled with ſin (of which afterwards) or the Will begins to conceive it by its expreſs conſent, *Conſcience* is apt to make an uproar in the ſoul, and to give it no reſt or quiet until the ſoul be reclaimed, or it ſelf be one way or other bribed or debauched. But theſe neglects of the mind being *ſpiritual*, without very diligent attendance, they are ſeldom taken notice of. Our *minds* are often in the Scriptures, called our *Spirits*, as *Rom.* 1. 9. *Whom I ſerve in my Spirit*; and are diſtinguiſhed from the *ſoul*, which principally intends the Affections, in that diſtribution, 1 *Theſſ.* 5. 23. Sanctifie you wholly, *your whole*

whole ſpirit and ſoul, that is, your mind and Affections. It is true where the *Spirit* is uſed to expreſs *ſpiritual* gifts, it is as unto thoſe gifts oppoſed to our *underſtandings*, 1 *Cor* 14. 15. Which is there taken for the firſt act of the mind in a rational perception of things. But as that word is applyed unto any faculty of our ſouls, it is the *mind* that it expreſſeth. This then being *our Spirit*, the actings of it are ſecret and hidden, and not to be diſcovered without ſpiritual wiſdom and diligence. Let us not ſuppoſe then that we dwell too long on this conſideration, which is of ſo great importance to us, and yet ſo hidden, and which we are apt to be very inſenſible of; and yet our carefulneſs in this matter is one of the beſt evidences that we have of our ſincerity. Let us not then be like a man that is ſenſible, and complains of a cut finger, but not of a decay of Spirits tending unto death. There remains therefore as unto this head of our diſcourſe, the conſideration of the charge of the mind in reference unto particular duties and ſins. And in the conſideration of it, we ſhall do theſe two things.

Firſt, Shew what is required in the *mind of a Believer* in reference unto particular duties.

Secondly, Declare the way of the working of the deceit of ſin to *draw* it off from its attendance thereunto. The like alſo ſhall be done with reſpect unto particular ſins, and their avoidance.

Firſt, For the right performance of any Duty, it is not enough that the thing it ſelf required be performed, but that it be univerſally ſquared and fitted unto the rule of it. Herein lyes the great *duty* of the *mind*, namely, to attend unto the *Rule* of

duties, and to take care that all the concernments of them be ordered thereby. Our progreſs in obedience, is our *edification* or building. Now it is but a very little furtherance unto a *building*, that a man bring wood and ſtones and heap them up together without order. They muſt be hewed and ſquared, and fitted by line and rule, if we intend to build. Nor is it unto any advantage unto our *edification* in faith and obedience, that we multiply duties, if we heap them upon one another, if we order and diſpoſe them not according to rule. And therefore doth God expreſly reject a *multitude of duties* when not univerſally ſuited unto the Rule, Iſa. 1. 11. *To what purpoſe is the multitude of your Sacrifices*; and v. 14. *They are a trouble unto me, I am weary to bear them.* And therefore all acceptable obedience is called a proceeding according unto rule, *Gal.* 6. 16. it is a *Canonical*, or regular obedience. As *letters in the Alphabet* heaped together ſignifie nothing, unleſs they are diſpoſed into their proper order; no more do our duties without this diſpoſal. That they be ſo, is the great duty of the mind, and which with all diligence it is to attend unto, *Epheſ.* 5. 15. *Walk circumſpectly*, exactly, accurately, that is, diligently in all things, take heed to the Rule of what you do. We *Walk* in duties, but we walk *circumſpectly* in this attention of the mind.

Secondly, There are ſome ſpecial things which the Rule directs unto, that the mind is to attend in every duty; as,

Firſt, That as to the *matter* of it, it be full and compleat. Under the Law, no Beaſt was allowed to be a Sacrifice that had any member wanting,

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any defect of parts. Such were rejected as well as thoſe that were *lame* or *blind*. Duties muſt be compleat as to the parts, the matter of them. There may be ſuch a part of the price kept back, as may make the tendering of all the reſidue unacceptable. *Saul* ſparing *Agag* and the fatteſt of the Cattle, rendered the deſtroying of all the reſt uſeleſs. Thus when men will *give alms*, or perform other ſervices, but not unto the proportion that the Rule requireth, and which the mind by diligent attention unto it might diſcover, the whole duty is vitiated.

Secondly, As to the *Principle* of it, namely, that it be done in faith, and therein by an actual derivation of ſtrength from Chriſt, (*John* 15. 5.) without whom *we can do nothing*. It is not enough that the Perſon be a *Believer*, though that be neceſſary unto every good work, *Epheſ.* 2. 10. But alſo that faith be peculiarly acted in every duty that we do. For our whole obedience is the *obedience of faith*, *Rom.* 1. 5. that is, which the Doctrine of faith requireth, and which the grace of faith beareth or bringeth forth. So Chriſt is expreſly ſaid to be *our life*, *Col.* 3. 4. Our ſpiritual life, that is the Spring, Author, and Cauſe of it. Now as in life natural, no vital act can be performed, but by the actual operation of the principle of life it ſelf; So in life ſpiritual, no ſpiritually vital act, that is, no duty acceptable to God, can be performed but by the actual working of Chriſt, who is our life. And this is no other way derived unto us but by faith. Whence ſaith the Apoſtle, Gal. 2. 20. *Chriſt liveth in me, and the life which I now lead in the fleſh, is by the faith of the Son of God.*

Not only was Chriſt his life, a living principle unto him, but he *led a life*, that is, diſcharged vital actions in all duties of holineſs and obedience, by the faith of the Son of God, or in him; deriving ſupplies of Grace and ſtrength from him thereby. This therefore ought a Believer diligently to attend unto, namely, that every thing he doth to God, be done in the ſtrength of Chriſt; which wherein it conſiſteth ought diligently to be enquired into by all who intend to walk with God.

Thirdly, In this reſpect unto Rule, the *manner* of the performance of every duty is to be regarded. Now there are two things in the manner of the performance of any duty which a Believer, who is truſted with ſpiritual light, ought to attend unto.

Firſt, that it be done *in the way*, and by the means that God hath preſcribed with reſpect unto the outward manner of its performance. And this is eſpecially to be regarded in duties of the worſhip of God; the matter and outward manner whereof do both equally fall under his command. If this be not regarded, the whole duty is vitiated. I ſpeak not of them who ſuffer themſelves to be deluded by the *deceitfulneſs of ſin*, utterly to diſregard the rule of the word in ſuch things, and to worſhip God according to their own imaginations; but of them principally, who although they in general profeſs to do nothing but *what* God requires, and *as* he requires it, yet do not diligently attend to the Rule, to make the Authority of God to be the ſole cauſe and reaſon both of what they do, and of the *manner* of the performance of it. And this is the reaſon that God ſo often calls on his People to *conſider diligently* and wiſely, that they

they may do all according as he had commanded.

Secondly, The Affections of the heart and mind in duties belong to the performance of them in the inward manner. The preſcriptions and commands of God for attendance hereunto are innumerable, and the want hereof renders every duty an abomination unto him. A *Sacrifice* without an heart, without ſalt, without fire, of what value is it? No more are duties without ſpiritual Affections. And herein is the mind to keep the charge of God; to ſee that the heart which he requires be tendered to him. And we find alſo that God requireth eſpecial Affections to accompany ſpecial duties. *He that gives with chearfulneſs*; which if they are not attended unto, the whole is loſt.

Fourthly, The mind is to attend unto the *Ends* of duties; and therein principally the glory of God in Chriſt. Several other *ends* will ſin and ſelf impoſe upon our duties: Eſpecially two it will preſs hard upon us with: Firſt, *Satisfaction of our convictions* and conſciences. Secondly, *The praiſe of men.* For ſelf-righteouſneſs and oſtentation are the main ends of Men that are fallen off from God in all moral duties whatſoever. In their ſins they endeavour for to ſatisfie their luſts, in their duties, their conviction, and pride. Theſe the mind of a Believer is diligently to watch againſt, and to keep up in all a ſingle eye to the glory of God, as that which anſwers the great and general rule of all our obedience; *Whatever you do, do it all to the glory of God.* Theſe and the like things, I ſay, which are commonly ſpoken unto, is the mind of a Believer obliged to attend diligently and conſtant-

ly unto, with reſpect unto all the particular duties of our walking before God. Here then lyes no ſmall part of the deceit of ſin. Namely, to *draw the mind off* from this watch, to bring an inadvertency upon it, that it ſhall not in theſe things keep the watch and charge of the Lord. And if it can do ſo, and thereby ſtrip our duties of all their excellencies which lye in theſe concernments of them, that the mind is to attend unto it will not much trouble it ſelf nor us about the duties themſelves. And this it attempts ſeveral wayes.

Firſt, By perſwading the *mind* to content it ſelf with *generals*, and to take it off from attending unto things in particular inſtances. For example; it would perſwade the ſoul to reſt ſatisfied in a *general aim* of doing things to the glory of God, without conſidering how every particular duty may have that tendency. Thus *Saul* thought that he had fulfilled his whole duty, and done the will of God, and ſought his Glory in his war againſt *Amalek*, when for want of attendance to every particular duty in that ſervice, he had diſhonoured God, and ruined himſelf and his Poſterity. And men may perſwade themſelves, that they have a general deſign for the *Glory of God*, when they have no active principle in particular duties tending at all that way. But if, inſtead of fixing the mind by faith on the peculiar advancing the glory of God in a duty, the ſoul content it ſelf with a *general notion* of doing ſo, the mind is already diverted and draw off from its chrage by the deceitfulneſs of ſin. If a man be travelling in a journey, it is not only required of him, that he bend his

his courſe that way, and ſo go on, but if he attend not unto every turning, and other occurrences in his way, he may wander and never come to his journeys end. And if we ſuppoſe that in *general* we aim at the Glory of God, as we all profeſs to do, yet if we attend not unto it diſtinctly upon every duty that occurs in our way, we ſhall never attain the *end* aimed at. And he who ſatisfies himſelf with this *general* purpoſe, without acting it in every *ſpecial* duty, will not long retain that purpoſe neither. It doth the ſame work upon the mind in reference unto the *principle* of our duties, as it doth unto the end. Their *principle* is, that they be done in faith, in the ſtrength of Chriſt; but if men content themſelves that they are *Believers*, that they have faith, and do not labour in every particular duty to act faith, to lead their ſpiritual lives in all the acts of them *by the faith of the Son of God*, the mind is drawn off from its duty. It is particular actions wherein we expreſs and exerciſe our faith and obedience; and what we are in them, that we are, and no more.

Secondly, It draws off the *mind* from the duties before mentioned, by inſinuating a ſecret *contentment* unto it from the duty it ſelf performed, as to the matter of it. This is a fair diſcharge of a natural conſcience. If the duty be performed, though as to the *manner* of its performance it come ſhort almoſt in all things of the rule, conſcience and conviction will be ſatisfied. As *Saul*, upon his expedition againſt *Amalek*, cries to *Samuel*, *Come in, thou bleſſed of the Lord, I have done the commandment of the Lord.* He ſatisfied himſelf, though he

had not attended as he ought to the whole will of God in that matter. And thus was it with them, *Isa.* 58. 3. *wherefore have we fasted*, say they, *and thou regardest it not*; they had pleased themselves in the performance of their duties, and expected that God also should be pleased with them. But he shews them at large wherein they had failed, and that so far as to render what they had done an abomination. And the like charge he expresseth against them, *chap.* 48. 1, 2. This the deceitfulness of sin endeavours to draw the mind unto, namely to take up in the performance of the duty it self. Pray thou oughtest, and thou hast prayed, give alms thou oughtest, and thou hast given alms; quiet then thy self in what thou hast done, and go on to do the like. If it prevail herein, the *mind* is discharged from farther attendance and watching unto duty, which leaves the soul on the borders of many evils. For,

Thirdly, Hence *customarineſs* in all duties will quickly ensue, which is the height of sins drawing off the mind from duty. For mens minds may be drawn from all duties, in the midst of the most abundant performance of them. For in and under them, the mind may be subject unto an *habitual* diversion from its charge and watch unto the rule. What is done with such a frame, is not done to God, *Amos* 5. 25. None of their Sacrifices were to God, although they professed that they were all so. But they attended not unto his Worship in faith, and unto his glory, and he despised all their duties. See also *Hos.* 10. 1. And this is the great reason why *Professors* thrive so little under the per-

performance of a multitude of duties. They attend not unto them in a *due manner*, their minds being drawn off from their circumſpect watch, and ſo they have little or no communion with God in them, which is the end whereunto they are deſigned, and by which alone they become uſeful and profitable unto themſelves. And in this manner are many duties of worſhip and obedience performed by a woful generation of *Hypocrites*, Formaliſts, and profane perſons, without either life or light in themſelves, or acceptation with God; their minds being wholly eſtranged from a due attendance unto what they do, by the power and deceitfulneſs of ſin.

Secondly, As it is in reſpect of duties, ſo alſo it is in reſpect of *ſins*. There are ſundry things in and about *every ſin* that the mind of a *Believer*, by vertue of its *office* and duty is obliged to attend diligently unto, for the preſervation of the ſoul from it. Things they are which God hath appointed and ſanctified, to give effectual rebukes and checks to the whole working of the Law of ſin, and ſuch as in the Law of grace, under which we are, are exceedingly ſuited and fitted unto that purpoſe. And theſe the *deceit of ſin* endeavours by all means to draw off the mind from a due conſideration of, and attendance unto. Some few of them we ſhall a little reflect upon.

Firſt, The firſt and moſt general is the *Sovereignty* of God, the great Law-giver, by whom it is forbidden. This *Joſeph* fixed on in his great temptation, *Gen.* 39. 9. *How can I do this great wickedneſs and ſin againſt God?* There was in it a great

great evil, a great ingratitude againſt man, which he pleads alſo and inſiſts upon, *ver.* 8, 9. but that which fixed his heart and reſolution againſt it, was the *formality* of it, that it was *ſin againſt God*, by whom it was ſeverely forbidden. So the Apoſtle informs us, that in our dealing in any thing that is againſt the Law, our reſpect is ſtill to be unto the *Law-giver* and his Sovereignty: *James* 4. 11, 12. *If thou judge the Law, thou art not a doer of the Law, but a judge; there is one Law-giver who is able to ſave and to deſtroy.* Conſider this always, there is one *Law-giver*, holy, righteous, armed with Sovereign Power and Authority; he is able to ſave and deſtroy. Hence ſin is called a *rebellion*, a caſting off his yoke, a deſpiſing of him, and that in his Sovereignty, as the great Law-giver; and this ought the mind always practically to attend unto, in all the luſtings, actings and ſuggeſtions of the Law of ſin, eſpecially when advantaged by any ſuitable or vigorous temptation. It is *God that hath forbidden this thing*, the great Law-giver, under whoſe abſolute Sovereignty I am, in dependance on whom I live, and by whom I am to be diſpoſed of, as to my preſent and eternal condition. This *Eve* fixed on at the beginning of her temptation, *God hath ſaid, we muſt not eat of this tree*, *Gen.* 3. 3. but ſhe kept not her ground, ſhe abode not by that conſideration, but ſuffered her mind to be diverted from it by the ſubtilty of *Sathan*, which was the entrance of her tranſgreſſion; and ſo it is unto us all in our deviations from obedience.

Secondly, The *deceit of ſin*, of every ſin, the *puniſhment* appointed unto it in the Law, is another thing

thing that the mind ought actually to attend unto, in reference unto every particular evil. And the diverſions from this, that the minds of men have been doctrinally and practically attended withall, have been an inlet into all manner of abominations. *Job* profeſſeth another frame in himſelf, *chap.* 31. 23. *Deſtruction from God was a terrour unto me, and by reaſon of his highneſs I could not endure.* Many evils he had mentioned in the fore-going verſes, and pleads his innocency from them, although they were ſuch as upon the account of his *Greatneſs* and Power, he could have committed eaſily without fear of danger from men. Here he gives the reaſon that prevailed with him ſo carefully to abſtain from them, *Deſtruction from God was a terrour to me, and by reaſon of his highneſs I could not endure.* I conſidered, ſaith he, that God had appointed death and deſtruction for the *puniſhment* of ſin, and that ſuch was his greatneſs, highneſs, and power, that he could inflict it unto the uttermoſt, in ſuch a way as no creature is able to abide or to avoid. So the Apoſtle directs Believers always to conſider what a *fearful thing it is to fall into the hands of the living God*, *Heb.* 10. 31. And that becauſe he hath ſaid, *Vengeance is mine, I will recompence*, *ver.* 30. He is a *ſin-avenging God*, that will by no means acquit the guilty; as in the declaration of his gracious Name, infinitely full of encouragements to poor ſinners in Chriſt, he addes that in the cloſe, that he will by no means clear the guilty, *Exod.* 34. 7. That he may keep upon the minds of them whom he pardoneth, a due ſenſe of the puniſhment that is due from his *vindictive*

Juſtice

Juſtice unto every ſin. And ſo the Apoſtle would have us mind, that even our *God is a conſuming fire, Heb.* 12. 29. that is, that we ſhould conſider his holineſs and vindictive Juſtice, appointing unto ſin a meet recompence of reward. And mens breaking through this conſideration, he reckons as the height of the aggravation of their ſins, *Rom.* 1. 32. *They know that it is the judgment of God, that they which commit ſuch things were worthy of death, yet continued to do them:* What hope is there for ſuch perſons? There is indeed relief againſt this conſideration for humbled believing ſouls in the blood of Chriſt; but this relief is not to *take off the mind* from it, as it is appointed of God to be a reſtraint from ſin. And both theſe conſiderations, even the *Sovereignty* of God, and the *puniſhment of ſin*, are put together by our Saviour, *Matth.* 10. 28. *Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the ſoul; but rather fear him which is able to deſtroy both ſoul and body in hell.*

Thirdly, The conſideration of all the *love and kindneſs* of God, againſt whom every ſin is committed, is another thing that the mind ought diligently to attend unto. And this is a prevailing conſideration, if rightly and graciouſly managed in the ſoul. This *Moſes* preſſeth on the people, *Deut.* 32. 6. *Do you thus requite the Lord, O fooliſh people and unwiſe? Is not he thy Father that bought thee? Hath he not made thee, and eſtabliſhed thee?* Is this a requital for *Eternal Love*, and all the fruits of it? for the love and care of a Father, of a Redeemer, that we have been made partakers of? And it is the ſame conſideration which the *Apoſtle* manageth to this purpoſe,

2 *Cor.*

2 *Cor.* 7. 1. *Having therefore theſe promiſes, dearly beloved, let us cleanſe our ſelves from all filthineſs of the fleſh and ſpirit, perfecting holineſs in the fear of God.* The receiving of the promiſes ought to be effectual, as to ſtir us up unto all holineſs, ſo to work and effect an abſtinence from all ſin. And what Promiſes are theſe? namely that God will *be a Father unto us, and receive us, chap.* 6. 17, 18. which compriſeth the whole of all the love of God towards us here, and to eternity. If there be any ſpiritual ingenuity in the ſoul, whilſt the mind is attentive to this conſideration, there can be no prevailing attempt made upon it by the power of ſin. Now there are two parts of this conſideration.

Firſt, That which is general in it, that which is common unto all believers. This is managed unto this purpoſe, 1 *Joh.* 3. 1, 2, 3. *Behold what manner of love the Father hath beſtowed upon us, that we ſhould be called the ſons of God; therefore the world knoweth us not becauſe it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the ſons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we ſhall be; but we know that when he ſhall appear, we ſhall be like him for we ſhall ſee him as he is. And every man that hath this hope, purifieth himſelf even as he is pure.* Conſider, ſaith he, the love of God, and the previledges that we enjoy by it: *Behold what manner of love the Father hath beſtowed upon us, that we ſhould be called the ſons of God. Adoption* is an eſpecial fruit of it, and how great a priviledge is this? Such love it is, and ſuch are the fruits of it, that the world knoweth nothing of the bleſſed condition which we obtain and enjoy thereby: *The world knoweth us not.* Nay, it is ſuch love, and

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ſo unſpeakably bleſſed and glorious are the effects of it, that we our ſelves are not able to comprehend them. What uſe then ought we to make of this contemplation of the excellent unſpeakable love of God? Why ſaith he, *Every one that hath this hope purifieth himſelf.* Every man who being made partaker of this Love, and thereupon an *hope* of the full enjoyment of the fruits of it, of being made like to God in glory, *purifieth himſelf*, that is, in an abſtinence from all and every ſin, as in the following words is at large declared.

Secondly, It is to be conſidered as to ſuch *peculiar mercies* and fruits of love, as every *ones ſoul* hath been made partaker of. There is no *Believer*, but beſides the love and mercy which he hath in common with all his brethren, he hath alſo in the lot of his inheritance, ſome *incloſures*, ſome eſpecial mercies wherein he hath a ſingle propriety. He hath ſome *Joy* which no ſtranger intermedleth withall, *Prov.* 14. 10. Particular applications of covenant love and mercy to his ſoul. Now theſe are all proviſions laid in by God, that they may be born in mind againſt an hour of temptation, that the conſideration of them may preſerve the ſoul from the attempts of ſin. Their neglect is an high aggravation of our provocations. 1 *King.* 11. 9. It is charged as the great evil of *Solomon*, that he had ſinned againſt ſpecial mercies, eſpecial intimations of love; he ſinned after God had appeared to him twice. God required that he ſhould have born in mind that *eſpecial favour*, and have made it an argument againſt ſin. But he neglected, and is burdened with this ſore rebuke. And in-

deed all eſpeciall mercies, all eſpecial tokens and pledges of love, are utterly loſt and miſpent upon us, if they are not improved unto this end. This then is another thing, that it is the duty of the mind greatly to attend unto, and to oppoſe effectually unto every attempt that is made on the ſoul by the Law of ſin.

Fourthly, The conſiderations that ariſe from the blood and mediation of Chriſt, are of the ſame importance. So the *Apoſtle* declares, 2 *Cor.* 5. 14, 15. *For the love of Chriſt conſtraineth us, becauſe we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead; and that he died for all, that they which live ſhould not henceforth live unto themſelves, but unto him which died for them, and roſe again.* There is a conſtraining efficacy in this conſideration, it is great, forcible, effectual, if duly attented unto. But I muſt not here in particular inſiſt upon theſe things. Nor,

Fifthly, Shall I ſpeak of the *inhabitation of the Spirit*, the greateſt priviledge that we are made partakers of in this world. The due conſideration how he is grieved by ſin, how his *dwelling place* is defiled thereby, how his comforts are forfeited, loſt, deſpiſed by it, might alſo be inſiſted on. But the inſtances paſſed through are ſufficient unto our purpoſe. Now herein lies the duty of the *mind*, in reference unto particular ſins and temptations. It is diligently and carefully to attend unto theſe things, to dwell conſtantly upon the conſideration of them, to have them in a continual readineſs to oppoſe unto all the luſtings, actings, warrings, attempts, and rage of ſin.

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In reference hereunto doth *ſin* in an eſpecial manner put forth and act its *deceit*. It labours by all means to draw off the mind from its *due attendance* unto theſe things; to deprive the ſoul of this great preſervative and antidote againſt its poiſon. It endeavours to cauſe the ſoul to ſatisfie it ſelf with general *undigeſted notions about ſin*, that it may have nothing in particular to betake it ſelf unto in its own defence, againſt its attempts and temptations. And the wayes whereby it doth this may be alſo briefly conſidered.

Firſt, It is from the deceit of ſin that the mind is *ſpiritually ſlothful*, whereby it becomes negligent unto this duty. The principal diſcharge of its truſt in this matter is expreſſed by *watching*, which is the great Caution that the Lord *Jeſus* gave unto his Diſciples in reference unto all their dangers from ſin and Satan, *Mark* 14. 37. *I ſay unto all watch.* That is, uſe your utmoſt diligence and circumſpection, that you be not ſurpriſed and entangled with temptations. It is called alſo *conſideration*; *Conſider your wayes*; *conſider your latter end*; the want whereof God complains of in his People, *Deut.* 32. 29. Now that which is contrary to theſe indiſpenſible conditions of our preſervation, is *ſpiritual ſlothfulneſs*, as the Apoſtle declares, Heb. 6. 11, 12. *And we deſire that every one of you, do ſhew the ſame diligence to the full aſſurance of hope unto the end, that you be not ſlothful.* If we ſhew not diligence, we are ſlothful, and in danger of coming ſhort to inherit the promiſes; See 2 Pet. 1. 5, 9. *And beſides this giving all diligence, add to your faith vertue, to vertue, knowledge* &c. *For if theſe things*

things be in you and abound, that they make you that you ſhall neither be barren, nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jeſus. But he that lacketh theſe things is blind, and cannot ſee afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old ſins; wherefore the rather Brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election ſure; for if you do theſe things you ſhall never fall; For ſo an entrance ſhall be adminiſtred unto you abundantly into the everlaſting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, ver. 9, 10. All this the mind is turned from, if once by the deceit of ſin it be made *ſlothful*. Now this ſloth conſiſts in three things.

Firſt, *Inadvertency*, it doth not ſet it ſelf to conſider and attend unto its ſpecial concernments. The Apoſtle perſwading the *Hebrews* with all earneſtneſs to *attend diligently*, to conſider carefully that they may not be hardened by the deceitfulneſs of ſin, gives this reaſon of their danger, that *they were dull of hearing*, Chap. 5. 11. That is, that they were *ſlothful*, and did not attend unto the things of their duty. A ſecret *regardleſneſs* is apt to creep upon the ſoul, and it doth not ſet it ſelf to a diligent marking how things go with it, and what is continually incumbent on it.

Secondly, An *unwillingneſs to be ſtirred up unto its duty*, Prov. 19. 24. *The ſlothful man hideth his hand in his boſom, and will not ſo much as bring it to his mouth again.* There is an unwillingneſs in *ſloth* to take any notice of warnings, calls, excitations, or ſtirrings up by the Word, Spirit, Judgements, any thing that God maketh uſe of, to call the mind unto a due conſideration of the

condition of the ſoul. And this is a perfect evidence that the mind is made *ſlothful* by the deceit of ſin, when eſpecial calls and warnings, whether in a ſuitable word, or a preſſing judgement, cannot prevail with it to pull its hand out of its boſome, that is, to ſet about the ſpecial duties that it is called unto.

Thirdly, *Weak and ineffectual attempts* to recover its ſelf unto its duty, Prov. 26. 14. *As the door turneth it ſelf upon its hinges, ſo doth the ſlothful man upon his bed.* In the turning of a door upon its hinges, there is ſome motion, but no progreſs. It removes up and down, but is ſtill in the place and poſture that it was. So is it with the ſpiritually *ſlothful man* on his bed, or in his ſecurity. He makes ſome motions or faint endeavours towards a diſcharge of his duty, but goes not on. There where he was one day, there he is the next; yea, there where he was one year, he is the next. His endeavours are faint, cold, and evanid; he gets no ground by them, but is alwayes beginning and never finiſhing his work.

Fourthly, *Heartleſneſs upon the apprehenſions of difficulties* and diſcouragements, Prov. 22. 13. *The ſlothful man ſaith there is a Lyon in the way, I ſhall be ſlain in the Streets.* Every difficulty deters him from duty. He thinks it impoſſible for him to attain to that accuracy, exactneſs, and perfection which he is in this matter to preſs after; & therefore contents himſelf in his old coldneſs, negligence, rather than to run the hazard of an univerſal circumſpection. Now if the deceit of ſin hath once *drawn away the mind* into this frame, it layes it open

open to every temptation and incurſion of ſin. The *Spouſe in the Canticles* ſeems to have been overtaken with this diſtemper, *Chap.* 5. 1, 2, 3. And this puts her on various *excuſes* why ſhe cannot attend unto the call of Chriſt, and apply her ſelf unto her duty in walking with him.

Secondly, It draws away the mind from its watch and duty in reference unto ſin by *ſurpriſals*. It falls in conjunction with ſome urging temptation, and *ſurprizeth the mind* into thoughts quite of another Nature than thoſe which it ought to inſiſt upon in its own defence. So it ſeems to have been with *Peter*; his carnal fear cloſing with the temptation wherein Satan ſought to winnow him, filled his mind with ſo many thoughts about his own imminent danger, that he could not take into conſideration the love and warning of Chriſt; nor the evil whereunto his temptation led him, nor any thing that he ought to have inſiſted on for his preſervation. And therefore upon a review of his folly in neglecting thoſe thoughts of God, and the love of Chriſt, which through the aſſiſtance of the Holy Ghoſt might have kept him from his ſcandalous fall, he *wept bitterly*. And this indeed is the common way of the working of the *deceit of ſin*, as unto particular evils. It layes hold on the mind *ſuddenly* with thoughtfulneſs about the preſent ſin, poſſeſſeth it, takes it up, ſo that either it recovers not it ſelf at all to the conſiderations mentioned, or if any thoughts of them be ſuggeſted, the mind is ſo prepoſſeſt and filled, that they take no impreſſion on the ſoul, or make no abode in it. Thus doubtleſs was *David* ſurpriſed in the

entrance of his great ſin. Sin and temptation did ſo *poſſeſs and fill his mind* with the preſent object of his luſt, that he utterly forgot, as it were, thoſe conſiderations which he had formerly made uſe of, when he ſo diligently kept himſelf from his Iniquity. Here therefore lyes the great wiſdom of the ſoul, in rejecting the very firſt motions of ſin, becauſe by parlies with them the mind may be drawn off from attending unto its preſervatives, and ſo the whole ruſh into evil.

Thirdly, It draws away the mind *by frequency and long continuance* of its ſolicitations, making as it were at laſt a conqueſt of it. And this happens not without an open neglect of the ſoul, in want of ſtirring up it ſelf to give an effectual rebuke in the ſtrength and by the Grace of Chriſt unto ſin, which would have prevented its prevalency. But of this, more ſhall be ſpoken afterwards. And this is the firſt way whereby the Law of ſin acts its deceit againſt the ſoul. It *draws off the mind* from attendance unto its charge and Office, both in reſpect of duty and ſin. And ſo far as this is done the Perſon is ſaid to be *drawn away, or drawn off.* He is tempted; every man is tempted, *when he is thus drawn away* by his own luſt, or the deceit of ſin dwelling in him. And the whole effect of this working of the deceituſlneſs of ſin may be reduced unto theſe three heads.

Firſt, The *remiſſion of an univerſally watchful frame of Spirit* unto every duty, and againſt all, even the moſt hidden and ſecret actings of ſin.

Secondly, The omiſſion of peculiar attending unto ſuch duties as have an eſpecial reſpect unto the

the weakning and ruine of the whole Law of Sin, and the obviating of its deceitfulneſs.

Thirdly, Spiritual ſloth, as to a diligent regard unto all the eſpecial concernments of Duties and Sins. When theſe three things, with their branches mentioned, leſs or more, are brought about, in, or upon the ſoul, or ſo far as they are ſo, ſo far a man is drawn off by his own luſt, or the deceit of ſin.

There is no need of adding here any directions for the prevention of this evil, they having ſufficiently been laid down in our paſſage through the conſideration both of the *duty* of the mind, and of the *deceit* of ſin.

CHAP. XI.

The working of Sin by Deceit to entangle the Affections. The wayes whereby it is done. Means of their prevention.

THe ſecond thing in the words of the Apoſtle aſcribed unto the *deceitful working of ſin* is its *enticing*. A man is drawn away and *enticed*. And this ſeems particularly to reſpect the *Affections*, as drawing away doth the mind. The *Mind* is drawn away from duty, and the *Affections* are enticed unto ſin. From the prevalency hereof a man is ſaid to be *enticed*, or *entangled as with a bait*, ſo the word imports. For there is an alluſion in it unto the *bait* wherewith a Fiſh is taken on the

hook which holds him to his deſtruction. And concerning this effect of the deceit of ſin, we ſhall briefly ſhew two things.

Firſt, What it is to be *enticed*, or to be *entangled* with the bait of ſin, to have the *Affections* tainted with an inclination thereunto, and when they are ſo.

Secondly, What courſe ſin takes, and what way it proceedeth in, thus to entice, enſnare, or entangle the ſoul.

For the firſt, Firſt, The Affections are certainly *entangled* when they ſtir up *frequent imaginations* about the *propoſed object* which this deceit of ſin leadeth and enticeth towards. When ſin prevails, and the Affections are gone fully after it, it *fills the imagination* with it, poſſeſſing it with Images, likeneſſes, appearances of it continually. Such Perſons *deviſe iniquity* and work evil on their beds, which they alſo practiſe when they are able, when it is in the *power of their hand*, *Mic.* 2. 1. As in particular, *Peter* tells us that they *have Eyes full of an Adultereſs, and they cannot ceaſe from ſin*, 2 Pet. 2. 14. That is, their *imaginations* are poſſeſt with a continual repreſentation of the object of their lusts. And it is to *in part* where the Affections are *in part* entangled with ſin, and begin to turn aſide unto it. *John* tells us that the things that are in the world, are the *luſt of the fleſh*, *the luſt of the eyes*, *and the pride of life*, 1 Ep. 2. 14. *The luſt of the Eyes* is that which by them is conveyed unto the ſoul. Now it is not the *bodily ſenſe* of *ſeeing*, but the fixing of the imagination from that ſenſe on ſuch thing, that is intended. And this is called

ed the *Eyes*, becauſe thereby things are conſtantly repreſented unto the mind and ſoul, as outward objects are unto the inward ſenſe by the Eyes. And oftentimes the *outward ſight of the Eyes* is the occaſion of theſe imaginations. So *Achan* declares how ſin prevailed with him, *Joſh.* 7. 21. Firſt *he ſaw* the wedge of Gold, and *Babyloniſh garment*, and then he coveted them. He rolled them, the pleaſures, the profit of them, in his Imagination, and then fixed his heart upon the obtaining of them. Now the heart may have a ſetled, fixed deteſtation of ſin; but yet if a man find that the *Imagination* of the mind is frequently ſolicited by it, and exerciſed about it, ſuch a one may know that his *Affections* are ſecretly enticed and entangled.

Secondly, This entanglement is heightned, when the *Imagination* can prevail with the mind *to lodge vain thoughts* in it, with ſecret delight and *complacency*. This is termed by *Caſuiſts*, *Cogitatio moroſa cum delectatione*, an abiding thought with delight, which towards forbidden objects is in all caſes *actually* ſinful. And yet, this may be, when the *Conſent of the Will* unto ſin is not obtained; when the ſoul would not for the world do the thing, which yet thoughts begin to lodge in the mind about. This *lodging of vain thoughts* in the heart the Prophet complains of as a thing greatly ſinful, and to be abhorred, *Jer.* 4. 14. All theſe thoughts are *Meſſengers* that carry ſin to and fro between the *Imagination* and the *Affections*, and ſtill encreaſe it, enflaming the Imagination, and more and more entangling the Affections. *Achan* thinks upon the *Golden Wedge*, this makes him like it, and

love it; by loving of it, his thoughts are infected, and return to the Imagination of its worth, and goodly ſhew, and ſo by little and little the ſoul is *enflamed* unto ſin. And here if the *Will* parts with its *Sovereignty*, ſin is actually conceived.

Thirdly, Inclinations, or readineſs to attend unto *extenuations of ſin*, or the reliefs that are tendered againſt ſin when committed, manifeſt the Affections to be entangled with it. We have ſhewed, and ſhall yet farther evidence that it is a great part of the deceit of ſin, to tender leſsning and extenuating thoughts of ſin unto the mind. *Is it not a little one?* or there is mercy provided, or it ſhall be in due time relinquiſhed and given over, is its language in a deceived heart. Now when there is a readineſs in the ſoul to hearken and give entertainment unto ſuch ſecret inſinuations ariſing from this deceit, in reference unto any ſin, or unapprovable courſe, it is an evidence that the *Affections* are enticed. When the ſoul is willing, as it were to be tempted, to be courted by ſin, to hearken to its dalliances and ſolicitations, it hath loſt of its conjugal Affections unto Chriſt, and is entangled. This is *looking on the Wine when it is red, when it giveth its colour in the Cup, when it moveth it ſelf aright*, *Prov.* 33. 21. A pleaſing contemplation on the invitations of ſin, whoſe end the wiſe Man gives us, *ver.* 32. When the deceit of ſin hath prevailed thus far on any Perſon, then he is *enticed* or *entangled*; the *Will* is not yet come to the actual conception of this or that ſin by its conſent, but the whole ſoul is in a near inclination thereunto. And many other inſtances I could give

give as tokens and evidences of this entanglement, Theſe may ſuffice to manifeſt what we intend thereby.

Our next enquiry is, how, or by what means the *deceit of ſin* proceeds thus to entice and entangle the Affections; and two or three of its baits are manifeſt herein.

Firſt It makes uſe of its former prevalency upon the mind in *drawing it off* from its watch and circumſpection. Sayes the Wiſe man, Prov. 1. 17. *Surely in vain is the Net ſpread in the ſight of any Bird*; or before the eyes of every thing that hath a wing, as in the *Original*. If it hath eyes open to diſcern the ſnare, and a wing to carry it away, it will not be caught. And in vain ſhould the *deceit of ſin* ſpread its *ſnares* and *Nets* for the entanglement of the ſoul, whileſt the Eyes of the mind are intent upon what it doth, and ſo ſtir up the wings of its *Will* and *Affections* to carry it away and avoid it. But if the *Eyes* be put out or diverted, the *wings* are of very little uſe for eſcape. And therefore this is one of the wayes which is uſed by them who take *Birds* or Fowls in their Nets, they have falſe lights, or ſhews of things to divert the ſight of their prey; and when that is done, they take the ſeaſon to caſt their Nets upon them. So doth the deceit of ſin, it firſt *draws off* and diverts the mind by falſe reaſonings and pretences, as hath been ſhewed, and then caſts its Net upon the Affections for their entanglement.

Secondly, Taking advantage of ſuch ſeaſons, it propoſeth ſin as *deſirable*, as exceeding ſatisfactory to the corrupt part of our Affections. It gilds over

over the object by a *thouſand pretences* which it preſents unto corrupt luſtings. This is the *laying of a bait*, which the Apoſtle in this Verſe evidently alludes unto. A *bait* is ſomewhat deſirable and ſuitable, that is propoſed to the hungry Creature for its ſatisfaction, and it is by all Artifices rendered deſirable and ſuitable. Thus is ſin preſented by the help of the imagination unto the ſoul; that is, ſinful and inordinate objects, which the *Affections* cleave unto, are ſo preſented. The Apoſtle tells us, that there are *pleaſures of ſin*, *Heb.* 11. 35. which unleſs they are deſpiſed, as they were by *Moſes*, there is no eſcaping of ſin it ſelf Hence they that *live in ſin*, are ſaid to *live in pleaſure*, *James* 5. 5. Now this pleaſure of ſin conſiſteth in its *ſuitableneſs* to give ſatisfaction to the fleſh, to luſt, to corrupt Affections. Hence is that caution, Rom. 13. 14. *Make no proviſion for the fleſh to fulfill the luſt thereof.* That is, do not ſuffer your minds, thoughts, or affections to fix upon ſinful objects, ſuited to give ſatisfaction to the luſts of the fleſh, to nouriſh and cheriſh them thereby. To which purpoſe he ſpeaks again, *Gal.* 5. 16. *Fulfill ye not the luſts of the fleſh.* Bring not in the pleaſures of ſin to give them ſatisfaction. When men are under the power of ſin, they are ſaid to *fulfill the deſires of the fleſh and of the Mind*, *Eph.* 2. 3. Thus therefore the *deceit of ſin* endeavours to entangle the *Affections*, by propoſing unto them through the aſſiſtance of the *Imagination* that ſuitableneſs which is in it to the ſatisfaction of its corrupt luſts, now ſet at ſome liberty by the inadvertency of the mind. It preſents its *Wine as ſparkling*

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in the cup, the beauty of the Adultereſs, the riches of the world unto ſenſual and covetous perſons, and ſomewhat in the like kind, in ſome degrees to Believers themſelves. When therefore, I ſay, ſin would entangle the ſoul, it prevails with the *imagination* to ſolicit the heart, by repreſenting this falſe painted beauty, or pretended ſatisfactorineſs of ſin: And then if Satan with any peculiar temptation fall in to its aſſiſtance, it oftentimes inflames all the affections, and puts the whole ſoul into diſorder.

Thirdly, It *hides the danger* that attends ſin, it covers it as the *hook* is covered with the *bait*, or the net ſpread over with meat for the fowl to be taken. It is not indeed poſſible that ſin ſhould utterly deprive the ſoul of the knowledge of the *danger* of it. It cannot diſpoſſeſs it of its notion or perſwaſion that the *wages of ſin is death*; and that it is the *judgment of God, that they that commit ſin are worthy of death.* But this it will do, it will ſo take up and poſſeſs the mind and affections with the baits and deſirableneſs of ſin, that it ſhall divert them from an actual and practical contemplation of the danger of it. What *Satan* did in and by his firſt temptation, that ſin doth ever ſince. At firſt *Eve* guards her ſelf, with calling to mind the *danger of ſin*; if we eat, or touch it, we ſhall die, *Gen.* 3. 3. But ſo ſoon as *Satan* had filled her mind with the beauty and uſefulneſs of the fruit to make one wiſe, how quickly did ſhe lay aſide her practical prevalent conſideration of the danger of eating it, the curſe due unto it; or elſe relieves her ſelf with a vain hope and pretence that it ſhould

ſhould not be, becauſe the *Serpent* told her ſo. So was *David* beguiled in his great tranſgreſſion, by the deceit of ſin; his luſt being pleaſed and ſatisfied, the conſideration of the guilt and danger of his tranſgreſſion was taken away: and therefore he is ſaid to have *deſpiſed the Lord*, 2 *Sam.* 12. 9. in that he conſidered not the evil that was in his heart, and the danger that attended it in the threatning or commination of the Law. Now ſin when it preſſeth upon the ſoul to this purpoſe, will uſe a thouſand wiles to hide from it the terrour of the Lord, the end of tranſgreſſions, and eſpecially of that peculiar folly which it ſolicits the mind unto. *Hopes of pardon* ſhall be uſed to hide it, and *future repentance* ſhall hide it, *preſent importunity* of luſt ſhall hide it, *occaſions and opportunities* ſhall hide it, *ſurprizals* ſhall hide it, *extenuation* of ſin ſhall hide it, *balancing of duties* againſt it ſhall hide it, *fixing the imagination* on preſent objects ſhall hide it, *deſperate reſolutions* to venture the uttermoſt for the enjoyment of luſt in its pleaſures and profits, ſhall hide it. A thouſand wiles it hath which cannot be recounted.

Fourthly, Having prevailed thus far, gilding over the pleaſures of ſin, hiding its end and demerit, it proceds to raiſe *perverſe reaſonings* in the mind, to fix it upon the ſin propoſed, that it may be conceived and brought forth, the affections being already prevailed upon; of which we ſhall ſpeak under the next head of its progreſs.

Here we may ſtay a little, as formerly, to give ſome few directions for the obviating of this woful work of the deceitfulneſs of ſin. Would we

not

not be *enticed* or *entangled*, would we not be diſpoſed to the conception of ſin, would we be turned out of the road and way which goes down to death; Let us take heed of our *Affections*, which are of ſo great concernment in the whole courſe of our obedience, that they are commonly in the Scripture called by the name of the *heart*, as the principal thing which God requires in our walking before him. And this is not ſlightly to be attended unto. *Prov.* 4. 23. ſaith the wiſe man, *Keep thy heart with all diligence*, or as in the Original, above or before all keepings; *Before every watch, keep thy heart.* You have many keepings that you watch unto; you watch to keep your lives, to keep your eſtates, to keep your reputations, to keep up your families; but, ſaith he, *above all theſe keepings*, prefer that, attend to that of the heart, of your affections, that they be not entangled with ſin; there is no ſafety without it. Save all other things and loſe the heart, and all is loſt, loſt unto all eternity. You will ſay then, what ſhall we do, or how ſhall we obſerve this duty?

Firſt, Keep your affections as to their *Object* in general. This advice the Apoſtle gives in this very caſe, *Coloſſ.* 3. his advice in the beginning of that chapter is to direct us unto the *mortification of ſin*, which he expreſly engageth in, *ver.* 5. *Mortifie therefore your members which are on the earth.* Prevent the working and deceit of ſin which wars in your members. To prepare us, to enable us hereunto, he gives us that great direction, *ver.* 2. *Set your affections on things above, not on things of the earth.* Fix your affections on heavenly things, this will enable

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you to mortifie ſin : fill them with the things that are above, let them be exerciſed with them, and ſo enjoy the chiefeſt place in them. They are *above*, bleſſed and ſuitable objects, meet for, and anſwering unto our affections. God himſelf, in his beauty and glory, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who is *altogether lovely, the chiefeſt of ten thouſand*; Grace and Glory, the Myſteries revealed in the Goſpel, the bleſſedneſs promiſed thereby. Were our affections filled, taken up, and poſſeſſed with theſe things, as it is our duty that they ſhould be, it is our happineſs when they are; what acceſs could ſin with its painted pleaſures, with its ſugred poiſons, with its envenomed baits, have unto our ſouls? how ſhould we loath all its propoſals, and ſay unto them, Get ye hence as an abominable thing? For what are the vain tranſitory pleaſures of ſin, in compariſon of the exceeding recompence of reward which is propoſed unto us? Which argument the Apoſtle preſſes, 2 *Cor.* 4. 18.

Secondly, As to the *Object of your affections in an eſpecial manner*; let it be the *Croſs of Chriſt*, which hath an exceeding efficacy towards the diſappointment of the whole work of Indwelling-ſin. *Gal.* 6. 14. *God forbid that I ſhould glory, ſave in the Croſs of our Lord Jeſus, whereby the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.* The *Croſs of Chriſt* he gloried and rejoyced in; this his heart was ſet upon, and theſe were the effects of it; it crucified the world unto him, made it a dead and undeſirable thing. The baits and pleaſures of ſin are taken all of them out of the world, and the things that are in the world, namely the *luſt of the fleſh*,

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the luſt of the eyes, and the pride of life. Theſe are the things that are in the world; from theſe doth ſin take all its baits, whereby it enticeth and entangleth our ſouls. If the heart be filled with the *Croſs of Chriſt*, it caſts death and undeſirableneſs upon them all, it leaves no ſeeming beauty, no appearing pleaſure or comelineſs in them. Again, ſaith he, *It crucifieth me to the world*; makes my heart, my affections, my deſires dead unto any of theſe things. It roots up corrupt luſts and affections, leaves no principle to go forth and make proviſion for the fleſh to fulfill the luſts thereof. Labour therefore to fill your hearts with the *Croſs of Chriſt*. Conſider the ſorrows he underwent, the curſe he bore, the blood he ſhed, the cries he put forth, the love that was in all this to your ſouls, and the myſtery of the grace of God therein. Meditate on the vileneſs, the demerit, and puniſhment of ſin as repreſented in the Croſs, the blood, the death of Chriſt. Is Chriſt *crucified* for ſin, and ſhall not our hearts be *crucified* with him unto ſin? Shall we give entertainment unto that, or hearken unto its dalliances, which wounded, which pierced, which ſlew our dear Lord Jeſus? God forbid. Fill your affections with the *Croſs of Chriſt*, that there may be no room for ſin. The world once put him out of the houſe into a ſtable, when he came to ſave us; let him now turn the world out of doors, when he is come to ſanctifie us.

Secondly, Look to the *vigour of the affections* towards heavenly things; if they are not conſtantly attended, excited, directed, and warned, they are apt to decay, and ſin lies in wait to take every advantage

vantage againſt them. Many complaints we have in the Scripture of thoſe who loſt their *firſt love*, in ſuffering their affections to decay. And this ſhould make us *jealous* over our own hearts, leſt we alſo ſhould be over-taken with the like back-ſliding frame. Wherefore be jealous over them, often ſtrictly examine them, and call them to account, ſupply unto them due conſiderations for their exciting and ſtirring up unto duty.

CHAP. XII.

The Conception of Sin through its Deceit. Wherein it conſiſteh. The conſent of the Will unto Sin. The Nature thereof. Ways and Means whereby it is obtained. Other Advantages made uſe of by the Deceit of Sin. Ignorance, Errours.

THe third ſucceſs of the deceit of ſin in its progreſſive work, is the *Conception of actual ſin.* When it hath drawn the mind off from its duty, and entangled the affections, it proceeds to *conceive ſin* in order to the bringing of it forth. *Then when luſt hath conceived it bringeth forth ſin.* Now the *conception of ſin*, in order unto its perpetration, can be nothing but the *conſent of the Will*: for as without the *conſent of the Will* ſin cannot be committed, ſo where the Will hath conſented unto it, there is nothing in the ſoul to hinder its actual accompliſhment.

pliſhment. God doth indeed by various ways and means fruſtrate the bringing forth of theſe adulterate conceptions, cauſing them to melt away in the womb, or one way or other prove abortive, ſo that not the leaſt part of that ſin is committed which is *willed* or *conceived*; yet there is nothing in the ſoul it ſelf that remains to give check unto it, when once the *will* hath given its conſent. Ofttimes when a cloud is full of rain, and ready to fall, a wind comes and drives it away. And when the *Will* is ready to bring forth its ſin, God diverts it by one wind or other, but yet the cloud was as full of rain as if it had fallen, and the ſoul as full of ſin as if it had been committed.

This *conceiving of luſt* or ſin then, is its prevalency in obtaining the *conſent of the will* unto its ſolicitations. And hereby the ſoul is deflowered of its chaſtity towards God in Chriſt, as the Apoſtle intimates, 2 *Cor.* 11. 2, 3. To clear up this matter we muſt obſerve,

Firſt, That the *Will* is the Principle, the next ſeat and cauſe of *obedience* and *diſobedience*. Moral actions are unto us, or in us, ſo far good or evil as they partake of the *conſent of the Will*. He ſpake truth of old who ſaid, *Omne peccatum eſt adeò voluntarium, ut non ſit peccatum niſi ſit voluntarium. Every ſin is ſo voluntary, that if it be not voluntary, it is not ſin.* It is moſt true of *actual ſins*. The formality of their iniquity ariſeth from the acts of the will in them, and concerning them, I mean, as to the *perſons* that commit them; otherwiſe in it ſelf the formal reaſon of ſin is its *aberration from the Law of God*.

Secondly, There is a two-fold *conſent of the will* unto ſin.

Firſt, That which is *full, abſolute*, complete, and upon deliberation. A prevailing conſent, the convictions of the mind being conquered, and no principle of grace in the will to weaken it. With this *conſent* the ſoul goes into ſin, as a Ship before the wind with all its ſails diſplayed, without any check or ſtop. It ruſheth into ſin like the horſe into the battel. Men thereby, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, *giving themſelves over to ſin with greedineſs*, *Epheſ.* 4. 19. Thus *Ahabs will* was in the murthering of *Naboth*, he did it upon deliberation, by contrivance, with a full conſent; the doing of it gave him ſuch ſatisfaction, as that it cured his *malady* or the diſtemper of his mind. This is that *conſent of the will* which is acted in the finiſhing and compleating of ſin, in unregenerate perſons, and is not required to the ſingle bringing forth of ſin, whereof we ſpeak.

Secondly, There is a *Conſent of the will*, which is attended with a ſecret *renitency* and *volition* of the contrary. Thus *Peter's* will was in the denying of his Maſter. His *will* was in it, or he had not done it; it was a *voluntary action*, that which he choſe to do at that ſeaſon. Sin had not been *brought forth*, if it had not been thus *conceived*. But yet at this very time there was reſident in his will a contrary principle of love to Chriſt, yea, and faith in him which utterly failed not. The ecafficy of it was intercepted, and its operations ſuſpended actually, through the violent urging of the temptation that he was under; but yet it was in his

will,

will, and weakned his conſent unto ſin, though it conſented: It was not done with *ſelf-pleaſing*, which ſuch full acts of the will do produce.

Thirdly, Although there may be a *predominant conſent in the will*, which may ſuffice for the conception of particular ſins, yet there cannot be an *abſolute, total, full* conſent of the will of a Believer unto any ſin: for,

Firſt, There is in his *will* a principle fixed on good, on all good, *Rom.* 7. 21. *He would do good.* The principle of grace in the *will*, inclines him to all good. And this in general is pravalent againſt the principle of ſin, ſo that the *will* is denominated from thence. Grace hath the rule and dominion, and not ſin, in the *will* of every Believer. Now that conſent unto ſin in the *will*, which is contrary to the inclination and general prevailing principle in the ſame will, is not, cannot be total, abſolute and complete.

Secondly, There is not only a general, [illegible]ing, prevailing principle in the will againſt ſin, but there is alſo a ſecret *reluctancy* in it againſt its own act in conſenting unto ſin. It is true, the ſoul is not ſenſible ſometimes of this *reluctancy*, becauſe the preſent conſent carries away the prevailing act of the *will*, and takes away the ſenſe of the *luſting of the ſpirit*, or reluctancy of the principle of grace in the will. But the general rule holdeth in all things at all times, *Gal.* 5. 17. *The ſpirit luſteth againſt the fleſh*: it doth ſo *actually*, though not always to the ſame degree, nor with the ſame ſucceſs. And the prevalency of the contrary principle in this or that particular act, doth not diſprove it. It is ſo

on the other ſide, There is no acting of grace in the *will* but ſin luſts againſt it, although that luſting be not made ſenſible in the ſoul, becauſe of the prevalency of the contrary acting of grace, yet it is enough to keep thoſe actings from perfection in their kind. So is it in this Renitency of grace againſt the acting of ſin in the ſoul; though it be not ſenſible in its operations, yet it is enough to keep that act from being full and complete. And much of ſpiritual wiſdom lies in diſcerning aright between the *ſpiritual Renitency* of the principle of grace in the will againſt ſin, and the rebukes that are given the ſoul by conſcience upon conviction for ſin.

Fourthly, Obſerve, that reiterated repeated acts of the *conſent of the will* unto ſin, may beget a diſpoſition and inclineableneſs in it unto the like acts, that may bring the will unto a *proneneſs and readineſs* to conſent unto ſin upon eaſie ſollicitation, which is a condition of ſoul dangerous, and greatly to be watched againſt.

Fifthly, This *conſent of the will*, which we have thus deſcribed, may be conſidered two ways.

Firſt, As it is exerciſed about the circumſtances, cauſes, means and inducements unto ſin. Secondly, As it reſpects this or that *actual ſin*. In the firſt ſenſe, there is a virtual conſent of the *will* unto ſin in every inadvertency unto the prevention of it, in every neglect of duty that makes way for it, in every hearkning unto any temptation leading towards it. In a word, in all the diverſions of the mind from its duty, and intanglements of the affections by ſin before mentioned. For where there

is no act of the *will formally*, or *virtually*, there is no sin. But this is not that which we now speak of. But in particular the *consent of the will* unto this or that actual sin, so far as that either sin is committed, or is prevented by other wayes and means not of our present consideration. And herein consists the *conceiving of sin.*

These things being supposed, that which in the next place we are to consider, is the *way* that the deceit of sin proceedeth in; to procure the *consent of the will*, and so to conceive actual sin in the soul. To this purpose observe,

First, That the *will is a rational appetite*; Rational as guided by the mind, and an appetite as excited by the Affections; and so in its operation or actings hath respect to both, is influenced by both.

Secondly, It chuseth nothing, consents to nothing but *sub ratione boni*, as it hath an *apprehension of good*, some present good. It cannot consent to any thing under the notion or apprehension of its being *evil* in any kind. *Good* is its natural and necessary object, and therefore whatever is proposed unto it for its consent, must be proposed under an appearance of being either good *in it self*, or good at *present* unto the soul, or good so circumstantiated as it is; So that,

Thirdly, We may see hence the reason why the *conception of sin* is here placed as a consequent of the *minds being drawn away*, and the *Affections being entangled*. Both these have an influence into the *consent of the will*, and the conception of this or that actual sin thereby. Our way therefore here is

made somewhat plain. We have seen at large how the mind is drawn away by the deceit of sin, and how the Affections are entangled, that which remains is but the proper effect of these things; For the discovery whereof we must instance in some of the special *deceits*, corrupt and fallacious reasonings before mentioned, and then shew their prevalency on the *Will* to a consent unto sin.

Fifthly, The *Will* is imposed upon by that corrupt reasoning, that *Grace is exalted in pardon*; and that thereby it provided for sinners. This first as hath been shewed, deceives the mind, and that opens the way to the wills consent, by removing a sight of *evil* which the will hath an aversation unto. And this in carnal hearts prevails so far as to make them think that their *liberty consists in being servants of corruption*, 2 Pet. 2. 19. And the poyson of it doth oftentimes taint and viciate the minds of Believers themselves; whence we are so cautioned against it in the Scripture. To what therefore hath been spoken before, unto the use and abuse of the Doctrine of the Grace of the Gospel, we shall add some few more considerations, and fix upon one place of Scripture that will give light unto it. There is a twofold *Mysterie* of Grace; of walking with God, and of coming unto God. And the great design of sin is to change the Doctrine and *Mysterie* of Grace in reference unto these things, and that by applying those considerations unto the one, which are proper unto the other, whereby each part is hindred, and the influence of the Doctrine of Grace into them for their furtherance defeated; See 1 *Joh.* 2. 1, 2. *These things write I*

unto

unto you that ye sin not, & if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins. Here is the whole design and use of the Gospel briefly expressed, *These things*, saith he, *I write unto you*, what things were these? Those mentioned, v. 2. *The life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us*; that is, the things concerning the person and mediation of Christ; and v. 7. that pardon, forgiveness and expiation from sin is to be attained by the blood of Christ. But to what end and purpose doth he write these things to them, What do they teach, what do they tend unto? An universal abstinence from sin; *I write unto you*, saith he, *that you sin not.* This is the proper, only, genuine end of the doctrine of the Gospel. But to abstain from all sin, is not our condition in this world. Chap. 1. 8. *If we say that we have no sin, we deceive our selves, and the truth is not in us.* What then shall be done in this case? In supposition of sin, that we have sinned, is there no relief provided for our souls and consciences in the Gospel? Yes, saith he, *If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is a propitiation for our sins.* There is full relief in the propitiation and intercession of Christ for us. This is the order and *method* of the Doctrine of the Gospel and of the application of it to our own souls; First, To keep us from sin; and then to relieve us against sin. But here entereth the deceit of sin, and puts this *new Wine into old Bottles*, whereby the bottles are broken, and the

the Wine periſheth as to our benefit by it. It changeth this *method* and order of the application of Goſpel-truths. It takes up the laſt firſt, and that excludes the uſe of the firſt utterly. If any man ſin there is pardon provided, is all the *Goſpel* that ſin would willingly ſuffer to abide on the minds of men. When we would come to God by believing, it would be preſſing the former part of being *free from ſin*; when the Goſpel propoſeth the latter principally, or the pardon of ſin for our encouragement. When we are come to God, and ſhould walk with him, it will have only the latter propoſed, that there is pardon of ſin, when the Goſpel principally propoſeth the former, of keeping our ſelves from ſin. The Grace of God bringing ſalvation having appeared unto us to that end and purpoſe. Now the mind being entangled with this deceit, drawn off from its watch by it, diverted from the true ends of the Goſpel, doth ſeveral wayes impoſe upon the *will* to obtain its conſent.

Firſt, By a ſudden *ſurprizal* in caſe of temptation. Temptation is the repreſentation of a thing as a *preſent good*, a particular good, which is a real evil, a general evil. Now when a temptation armed with opportunity and provocation, befalls the ſoul, the principle of Grace in the *will* riſeth up with a rejection and deteſtation of it. But on a ſudden the *mind* being deceived by ſin, breaks in upon the *will*, with a corrupt fallacious reaſoning from Goſpel-Grace and Mercy, which firſt ſtaggers, then abates the wills oppoſition, and then cauſeth it to caſt the ſcale by its conſent of the ſide of temptation,

tion, preſenting evil as a preſent good; and ſin in the ſight of God is conceived, though it be never committed. Thus is the ſeed of God ſacrificed to *Moloch*, and the weapons of Chriſt abuſed to the ſervice of the Devil.

Secondly, It doth it inſenſibly. It inſinuates the poyſon of this corrupt reaſoning by little and little, untill it hath greatly prevailed. And as the whole effect of the Doctrine of the Goſpel in holineſs and obedience, conſiſts in the ſouls being caſt into the frame and mould of it, *Rom.* 6. 17. So the whole of *Apoſtaſie* from the Goſpel, is principally the caſting of the ſoul into the mould of this falſe reaſoning, that ſin may be indulged unto upon the account of Grace and pardon. Hereby is the ſoul gratified in ſloth and negligence, and taken off from its care, as to particular duties and avoidance of particular ſins. It works the ſoul inſenſibly off from the myſterie of the Law of Grace, to look for ſalvation as if we had never performed any duty, being after we have done all unprofitable ſervants, with a reſting on Soveraign Mercy, through the blood of Chriſt, and to attend unto duties with all diligence as if we looked for no mercy; that is with no leſs care, though with more liberty and freedom. This the deceitfulneſs of ſin endeavoureth by all means to work the ſoul from, and thereby debaucheth the *will* when its conſent is required unto particular ſins.

Secondly, The deceived *mind* impoſeth on the *will* to obtain its conſent unto ſin, by propoſing unto it, the advantages that may accrew and ariſe thereby, which is one *Medium* whereby its

ſelf

ſelf alſo is drawn away. It renders that which is *abſolutely evil*, a preſent *appearing good*. So was it with *Eve*, *Gen.* 3. laying aſide all conſiderations of the Law, Covenant, and threats of God, ſhe all at once reflects upon the advantages, pleaſures and benefits which ſhe ſhould obtain by her ſin, and reckons them up to ſolicit the conſent of her will. *It is*, ſaith ſhe, *good for food, pleaſant to the Eyes, and to be deſired to make one wiſe*. What ſhould ſhe do then but eat it; her will conſented and ſhe did ſo accordingly. Pleas for Obedience are laid out of the way, and only the pleaſures of ſin are taken under conſideration. So ſaith *Ahab*, 1 King. 21. *Naboth's Vineyard is near my houſe, and I may make it a Garden of Herbs*, therefore I muſt have it. Theſe conſiderations a deceived mind impoſed on his *Will*; until it made him obſtinate in the purſuit of his covetouſneſs through perjury and murther, to the utter ruine of himſelf and his Family. Thus is the guilt and tendency of ſin hid under the covert of advantages and pleaſures, and ſo is conceived or reſolved on in the ſoul.

Secondly, As the *mind* being *withdrawn*, ſo the *Affections* being *enticed* and entangled, do greatly farther the conception of ſin in the ſoul by the *conſent of the will*; and they do it two waies.

First, By ſome haſty *impulſe and ſurpriſal*; being themſelves ſtirred up, incited, and drawn forth by ſome violent provocation, or ſuitable temptation, they put the whole ſoul as it were into a combuſtion, and draw the will into a conſent unto what they are provoked unto and entangled with.

withal. So was the caſe of *David* in the matter of *Nabal.* A violent provocation from the extream unworthy carriage of that fooliſh Churle, ſtirs him up to wrath and revenge, 1 *Sam.* 25. 13. He reſolves upon it, to deſtroy an whole Family, the Innocent with the Guilty, *ver.* 33, 34. Self-revenge, and murther, were for the ſeaſon conceived, reſolved, conſented unto, until God graciouſly took him off. His entangled, provoked Affections, ſurpriſed his *Will* to conſent unto the conception of many bloody ſins. The caſe was the ſame with *Aſa* in his *anger*, when he ſmote the Prophet, and with *Peter* in his *fear* when he denyed his Maſter. Let that ſoul which would take heed of conceiving ſin, take heed of entangled Affections. For ſin may be *ſuddenly* conceived, the prevalent conſent of the will may be ſuddenly obtained, which gives the ſoul a fixed guilt, though the ſin it ſelf be never actually brought forth.

Secondly, Enticed Affections procure the *conſent of the will by frequent ſolicitations*, whereby they get ground inſenſibly upon it, and Enthrone themſelves. Take an Inſtance in the Sons of *Jacob*, *Gen.* 37. 4. They *hate* their Brother, becauſe their Father loved him. Their Affections being enticed, many new occaſions fall out to *entangle* them farther, as his *Dreams* and the like. This lay rankling in their hearts, and never ceaſed ſoliciting their *wills*, until they reſolved upon his death. The unlawfulneſs, the unnaturalneſs of the action, the grief of their aged Father, the guilt of their own ſouls, are all laid aſide; that hatred and

envy that they had conceived againſt him ceaſed not until they had got the conſent of their wills to his ruine. This gradual progreſs of the prevalency of corrupt Affections to ſolicite the ſoul unto ſin the Wiſe Man excellently deſcribes, *Prov.* 23. 31, 32, 33, 34, 35. And this is the common way of ſins procedure in the deſtruction of ſouls which ſeem to have made ſome good Engagements in the wayes of God. When it hath entangled them with one temptation, and brought the will to ſome liking of it, that preſently becomes another temptation, either to the neglect of ſome duty, or to the refuſal of more light; and commonly that whereby men fall off utterly from God, is not that wherewith they are firſt entangled. And this may briefly ſuffice for the third *Progreſſive Act* of the deceit of ſin. It obtains the *wills conſent* unto its conception, and by this means are multitudes of ſins *conceived in the heart* which very little leſs defile the ſoul, or cauſe it to contract very little leſs guilt, than if they were actually committed.

Unto what hath been ſpoken concerning the *deceitfulneſs* of *indwelling-ſin* in general, which greatly evidenceth its *power* and efficacy, I ſhall adde as a cloſe of this diſcourſe, one or two particular ways of its deceitful actings, conſiſting in advantages that it maketh uſe of, and means of relieving it ſelf againſt that diſquiſition which is made after it by the Word and Spirit for its ruine. One head only of each ſort we ſhall here name.

Firſt, It makes great advantage of the *darkneſs of the mind*, to work out its deſign and intend-

ments.

ments. The *ſhades of a mind* totally dark, that is, devoid utterly of ſaving grace, are the proper working place of ſin. Hence the effects of it are called, the *works of darkneſs*, *Epheſ.* 5. 11. *Rom.* 13. 12. as ſpringing from thence. Sin works and brings forth by the help of it. The working of luſt under the covert of a *dark mind*, is as it were the upper Region of hell; for it lies at the next door to it for filth, horrour, and confuſion. Now there is a *partial darkneſs* abiding ſtill in Believers; they *know but in part*, 1 *Cor.* 13. 12. Though there be in them all a principle of ſaving light, the day-ſtar is riſen in their hearts, yet all the *ſhades of darkneſs* are not utterly expelled out of them in this life. And there are two parts, as it were, or principal effects of the *remaining darkneſs* that is in Believers. Firſt, *Ignorance*, or a neſcience of the will of God, either *Juris* or *Facti*, of the Rule and Law in general, or of the reference of the particular fact that lies before the mind unto the Law. Secondly, *Errour* and miſtakes; poſitively taking that for truth which is falſhood, and that for *light* which is *darkneſs*. Now of both theſe doth the *Law of ſin* make great advantage for the exerting of its power in the ſoul.

Firſt, Is there a remaining ignorance of any thing of the will of God, ſin will be ſure to make uſe of it, and improve it to the uttermoſt. Though *Abimelech* were not a *Believer*, yet he was a perſon that had a *moral integrity* with him in his ways and actions; he declares himſelf to have had ſo, in a ſolemn appeal to God the ſearcher of all hearts, even in that wherein he miſcarried, *Gen.* 20. 5.

But

But being ignorant that *fornication* was a ſin, or ſo great a ſin, as that it became not a morally honeſt man to defile himſelf with it, luſt hurries him into that intention of evil in reference unto *Sarah*, as we have it there related. God complains that his people *periſhed for lack of knowledge*, Hoſ. 4. 6. Being ignorant of the mind and will of God, they ruſh'd into evil at every command of the Law of ſin. Be it as to any duty to be performed, or as to any ſin to be committed, if there be in it darkneſs or ignorance of the mind about them, ſin will not loſe its advantage. Many a man being ignorant of the duty incumbent on him for the *inſtruction of his family*, caſting the whole weight of it upon the publick teaching, is by the *deceitfulneſs of ſin* brought into an habitual ſloth and negligence of duty. So much *ignorance* of the Will of God and duty, ſo much advantage is given to the Law of ſin. And hence we may ſee what is that true knowledge which with God is acceptable; how exactly doth many a poor ſoul, who is low as to notional knowledge, yet walk with God? It ſeems they know ſo much, as ſin hath not on that account much advantage againſt them; when others high in their notions, give advantage to their luſts even by their *ignorance*, though they know it not.

Secondly, *Errour* is a worſe part or effect of the minds darkneſs, and gives great advantage to the Law of ſin. There is indeed *ignorance* in every *error*, but there is not *error* in all *ignorance*, and ſo they may be diſtinguiſhed. I ſhall need to exemplifie this but with one conſideration, and that is,

is, of men, who being zealous for ſome *error*, do ſeek to ſuppreſs and perſecute the truth. Indwelling-ſin deſires no greater advantage. How will it every day, every hour pour forth wrath, revilings, hard ſpeeches; breathe revenge, murther, deſolation, under the name perhaps of zeal. On this account we may ſee poor creatures pleaſing themſelves every day, as if they vaunted in their excellency, when they are foaming out their own ſhame. Under their real darkneſs and pretended zeal, ſin ſits ſecurely and fills Pulpits, Houſes, Prayers, Streets, with as bitter fruits of envy, malice, wrath, hatred, evil ſurmiſes, falſe ſpeakings, as full as they can hold. The common iſſue with ſuch poor creatures, is, the holy bleſſed meek Spirit of God withdraws from them, and leaves them viſibly and openly to that evil, froward, wrathful, worldly ſpirit, which the Law of ſin hath cheriſhed and heightned in them. Sin dwells not any where more ſecure, than in ſuch a frame. Thus I ſay, it lays hold in particular of advantages to practiſe upon, with its deceitfulneſs, and therein alſo to exert its power in the ſoul, whereof this ſingle inſtance of its improving the darkneſs of the mind unto its own ends, is a ſufficient evidence.

Secondly, It uſeth means of relieving it ſelf againſt the purſuit that is made after it in the heart by the Word and Spirit of grace. One alſo of its wiles, in the way of inſtance, I ſhall name in this kind, and that is the *alleviation of its own guilt*. It pleads for it ſelf, that it is not ſo bad, ſo filthy, ſo fatal as is pretended; and this courſe of extenu-

extenuation it proceds in two ways. First, *Absolutely*; many secret pleas it will have that the evil which it tends unto is not so pernicious as conscience is perswaded that it is, it may be ventured on without ruine. These considerations it will strongly urge, when it is at work in a way of surprizal, when the soul hath no leisure or liberty to weigh its suggestions in the ballance of the Sanctuary, and not seldom is the *will* imposed on hereby, and advantages gotten to shift it self from under the sword of the Spirit. It is not such but that it may be let alone, or suffered to die of it self, which probably within a while it will do; no need of that violence which in mortification is to be offered; it is time enough to deal with a matter of no greater importance hereafter; With other pleas like those before-mentioned. Secondly, *Comparatively*, and this is a large field for its deceit and subtilty to lurk in. Though it is an evil indeed to be relinquished, and the soul is to be made watchful against it, yet it is not of the magnitude and degree; as we may see in the lives of others, even Saints of God, much less such as some Saints of old have fallen into. By these and the like pretences, I say, it seeks to evade and keep its aboad in the soul when pursued to destruction. And how little a portion of its deceitfulness is it that we have declared?

CHAP.

CHAP. XIII.

Several waies whereby the bringing forth of conceived Sin is obſtructed.

BEfore we proceed to the remaining evidences of the power and efficacy of the *Law of ſin*, we ſhall take occaſion from what hath been delivered, to divert unto one conſideration that offers it ſelf from that Scripture, which was made the bottom and foundation of our diſcourſe of the general *deceitfulneſs of ſin*; namely *James* 1. 14. The Apoſtle tells us that *luſt conceiving brings forth ſin*; ſeeming to intimate, that look what ſin is conceived, that alſo is brought forth. Now placing the conception of ſin, as we have done, in the *conſent of the Will* unto it, and reckoning, as we ought, the bringing forth of ſin to conſiſt in its *actual commiſſion*, we know that theſe do not neceſſarily follow one another. There is a world of ſin conceived in the womb of the wills and hearts of men, that is never brought forth. Our preſent buſineſs then ſhall be to enquire whence that comes to paſs. I anſwer then;

Firſt, That this is not ſo, is no thanks to ſin, nor the Law of it. What it conceives, it would bring forth; and that it doth not, is for the moſt part but a ſmall abatement of its guilt. A *determinate will* of actual ſinning, is actual ſin. There is nothing wanting on ſins part, that every con-

ceived ſin is not actually accompliſhed. The obſtacle and prevention lies on another hand.

Secondly, There are two things that are neceſſary in the creature that hath *conceived ſin*, for the bringing of it forth. Firſt, *Power*. Secondly, *Continuance in the will of ſinning*, until it be perpetrated and committed. Where theſe *two* are, actual ſin will unavoidably enſue. It is evident therefore, that that which hinders conceived ſin from being brought forth, muſt affect either the *power* or the *will* of the ſinner. This muſt be from God. And he hath two waies of doing it. Firſt, by his *Providence*, whereby he obſtructs the *power* of ſinning. Secondly, By his *Grace*, whereby he diverts or changes the *will* of ſinning. I do not mention theſe waies of Gods diſpenſations thus diſtinctly, as though the one of them were alwaies without the other; for there is much of *grace* in providential adminiſtrations, and much of the *wiſdom* of providence ſeen in the diſpenſations of grace. But I place them in this diſtinction, becauſe they appear moſt eminent therein. Providence in outward acts reſpecting the power of the creature, Grace common or ſpecial in internal efficacie, reſpecting his will. And we ſhall begin with the firſt.

Firſt, When ſin is conceived, the Lord obſtructs its production by his providence in taking away, or taking ſhort that *power* which is abſolutely neceſſary for its bringing forth or accompliſhment. As,

Firſt, *Life* is the foundation of all power, the principle of operation. When that ceaſeth, all power ceaſeth with it. Even God himſelf, to

evince

evince the everlaſting ſtability of his own power, gives himſelf the title of the *living God.* Now he frequently obviates the power of exerting ſin actually, by cutting ſhort and taking away the *lives* of them that have conceived it. Thus he dealt with the Army of *Senacherib*, when according as he had purpoſed, ſo he threatned that *the Lord ſhould not deliver Jeruſalem out of his hand*, 2 *Kings* 18.35. God threatens to cut ſhort his *power*, that he ſhould not execute his intendment, *chap.* 19.28. which he performs accordingly, by taking away the *lives of his ſouldiers*, ver.35. without whom it was impoſſible that his conceived ſin ſhould be brought forth. This providential diſpenſation in the obſtruction of conceived ſin, *Moſes* excellently ſets forth in the caſe of *Pharaoh*, *Exod.* 15.9,19. *The enemy ſaid, I will purſue, I will overtake, I will divide the ſpoil, my luſts ſhall be ſatisfied upon them: I will draw my ſword, my hand ſhall deſtroy them. Thou didſt blow with thy wind, the Sea covered them, they ſank as lead in the mighty waters.* Sins conception is fully expreſſed, and as full a prevention is annexed unto it. In like manner he dealt with the Companies of *Fifties* and their *Captains*, who came to apprehend *Elijah*, 2 *Kings* 1.10,11. *Fire* came down from Heaven and conſumed them, when they were ready to have taken him. And ſundry other inſtances of the like nature might be recorded. That which is of univerſal concernment, we have in that great *providential alteration*, which put a period to the lives of men. Men living *hundreds of years*, had a long ſeaſon to bring forth the ſins they had conceived; thereupon the

earth was filled with violence, injuſtice, and rapine, and all *fleſh corrupted their waies*, Gen. 6. 12, 19. To prevent the like inundation of ſin, God ſhortens the courſe of the pilgrimage of men in the earth, and reduces their lives to a much ſhorter meaſure. Beſides this general Law, God daily thus cuts off perſons, who had conceived much miſchief and violence in their hearts, and prevents the execution of it. *Blood-thirſty and deceitful men do not live out half their days.* They have yet much work to do, might they have but ſpace given them to execute the bloody and ſinful purpoſes of their minds. The *Pſalmiſt* tells us, *Pſal.* 146. 4. *In the day that the breath of man goeth forth, his thoughts periſh:* he had many contrivances about ſin, but now they are all cut off. So alſo, *Eccleſ.* 8. 12, 13. *Though a ſinner do evil an hundred times, and his days be prolonged; yet ſurely I know that it ſhall be well with them that fear God, which fear before him; but it ſhall not be well with the wicked, neither ſhall he prolong his daies, which are as a ſhadow, becauſe he feareth not before God.* How long ſoever a wicked man lives, yet he dies *judicially*, and ſhall not abide to do the evil he had conceived.

But now ſeeing we have granted, that even *Believers* themſelves may conceive ſin through the power and the deceitfulneſs of it, it may be enquired whether God ever thus *obviates* its production and accompliſhment in them, by cutting off and taking away their lives, ſo as that they ſhall not be able to perform it: I anſwer,

Firſt, That God doth not *judicially* cut off and take away the life of any of *his*, for this end and purpoſe,

purpoſe, that he may thereby prevent the execution, or bringing forth of any particular ſin that he had conceived, and which without that *taking away* he would have perpetrated. For,

Firſt, This is directly contrary to the very declared end of the *patience of God* towards them, 2 *Pet.*3.9. This is the very end of the *long-ſuffering of God towards Believers*, that before they depart hence, they may come to the *ſenſe, acknowledgment*, and repentance of every known ſin. This is the conſtant and unchangeable rule of Gods patience in the Covenant of Grace; which is ſo far from being in them an incouragement unto ſin, that it is a motive to univerſal watchfulneſs againſt it, of the ſame nature with all Goſpel-grace, and of mercy in the blood of Chriſt. Now this diſpenſation whereof we ſpeak, would lie in a direct contradiction unto it.

Secondly, This alſo flows from the former, that whereas *conceived ſin* contains the whole nature of it, as our Saviour at large declares, *Matth.*5. And to be cut off under the guilt of it, to prevent its farther progreſs, argues a continuance in the purpoſe of it without repentance; it cannot be but they muſt periſh for ever who are ſo *judicially* cut off. But God deals not ſo with his, he caſts not off the people whom he did fore-know. And thence *David* prays for the patience of God before-mentioned, that it might not be ſo with him, *Pſa.*39.13. *O ſpare me that I may recover ſtrength, before I go hence and be no more.* But yet,

Secondly, There are ſome caſes wherein God may, and doth take away the *lives of his own* to

prevent the guilt that otherwiſe they would be involved in; As,

Firſt, In the coming of ſome great temptation and tryal upon the world. God knowing that ſuch and ſuch of his would not be able to withſtand it, and hold out againſt it, but would diſhonour him, and defile themſelves, he may, and doubtleſs often doth take them out of the world, to take them out of the way of it. *Iſa.* 57. 1. *The righteous is taken away from the evil to come*; not only the evil of puniſhment and judgement, but the evil of temptations and trials, which oftentimes proves much the worſe of the two. Thus a Captain in war will call off a ſouldier from his watch and guard, when he knows that he is not able, through ſome infirmity to bear the ſtreſs and force of the enemy that is coming upon him.

Secondly, In caſe of their engagement into any way not acceptable to him, through ignorance, or not knowing of his mind and will. This ſeems to have been the caſe of *Joſiah*. And doubtleſs the Lord doth oftentimes thus proceed with his. When any of *his own* are engaged in waies that pleaſe him not, through the darkneſs and ignorance of their minds, that they may not proceed to farther evil or miſchief, he calls them off from their ſtation and employment, and takes them to himſelf, where they ſhall erre and miſtake no more. But in ordinary caſes, God hath other waies of diverting his own from ſin, than by killing of them, as we ſhall ſee afterwards.

Secondly, God providentially hinders the bringing forth of conceived ſin, by taking away, and

and *cutting ſhort the power of them that had conceived it*; ſo that though their lives continue, they ſhall not have that *power*, without which it is impoſſible for them to execute what they had intended, or to bring forth what they had conceived. Hereof alſo we have ſundry inſtances. Thus was the caſe with the *Builders of Babel*, Gen. 11. What ever it were in particular that they aimed at, it was in the purſuit of a deſign of Apoſtaſie from God. One thing requiſite to the accompliſhing of what they aimed at, was the *oneneſs of their language*; ſo God ſayes, *v.* 6. *They have all one language, and this they begin to do, and now nothing will be reſtrained from them that they have imagined to do.* In an ordinary way they will accompliſh their wicked deſign. What courſe doth God now take to obviate their conceived ſin? doth he bring a flood upon them to deſtroy them, as in the old world ſometime before? Doth he ſend his Angel to cut them off, like the Army of *Senacherib* afterwards? Doth he by any means take away their lives? No, their lives are continued, but he *confounds their language*, ſo that they cannot go on with their work, *ver.* 7. takes away that wherein their power conſiſted. In like manner did he proceed with the *Sodomites*, Gen. 19. 11. they were engaged in, and ſet upon the purſuit of their filthy luſts. God ſmites them with *blindneſs*, ſo that they could not find the door where they thought to have uſed violence for the compaſſing of their ends; their *lives* were continued, and their will of ſinning, but their *power* is cut ſhort and abridged. His dealing with *Jeroboam*, 1 *King.* 13. 4. was of the

ſame nature. He *ſtretched out his hand* to lay hold of the Prophet, and it withered and became uſeleſs. And this is an eminent way of the effectual acting of Gods providence in the world, for the ſtopping of that inundation of ſin, which would overflow all the earth were every womb of it opened. He cuts men ſhort of their *moral* power, whereby they ſhould effect it. Many a wretch that hath conceived miſchief againſt the Church of God, hath by this means been diveſted of his *power*, whereby he thought to accompliſh it. Some have their bodies ſmitten with diſeaſes, that they can no more ſerve their luſts, nor accompany them in the perpetrating of folly. Some are deprived of the inſtruments whereby they would work. There hath been for many daies, ſin and miſchief enough conceived, to root out the generation of the righteous from the face of the earth, had men ſtrength and ability to their will, did not God cut off and ſhorten their power, and the daies of their prevalency. *Pſa.*64.6. *They ſearch out iniquities, they accompliſh a diligent ſearch, both the inward thought of every one of them and the heart is deep.* All things are in a readineſs, the deſign is well laid, their counſels are deep and ſecret. What now ſhall hinder them from doing what ever they have imagined to do? *v.* 7,8. *But God ſhall ſhoot at them with an arrow, ſuddenly ſhall they be wounded: ſo they ſhall make their own tongue to fall upon themſelves.* God meets with them, brings them down, that they ſhall not be able to accompliſh their d ſign. And this way of Gods preventing ſin, ſeems to b: at e ſt ordinarily, peculiar to the men of the world;

world; God deals thus with them every day, and leaves them to pine away in their ſins. They go all their daies big with the iniquity they have conceived, and are greatly burdened that they cannot be delivered of it. The Prophet tells us, that *they practiſe iniqnity that they had conceived, becauſe it is in the power of their hand*, Micah 2. 1. If they have power for it, they will accompliſh it; *Ezek.* 22. 6. *To their power they ſhed blood.* This is the meaſure of their ſinning, even their power. They do many of them, no more evil, they commit no more ſin than they can. Their whole reſtraint lies in being cut ſhort in power in one kind or another. Their bodies will not ſerve them for their contrived uncleanneſſes; nor their hands for their revenge and rapine, nor their Inſtruments for perſecution; but they go burdened with conceived ſin, and are diſquieted and tortured by it all their daies. And hence they become in themſelves, as well as unto others, a *troubled Sea that cannot reſt*, *Iſa.* 57. 20.

It may be alſo in ſome caſes, under ſome violent temptations, or in miſtakes, God may thus obviate the accompliſhment of conceived ſin in his own. And there ſeems to be an inſtance of it in his dealing with *Jehoſaphat*, who had deſigned againſt the mind of God to joyn in affinity with *Ahab*, and to ſend his Ships with him to *Tarſhiſh*; but God breaks his Ships by a wind, that he could not accompliſh what he had deſigned. But in Gods dealing with us in this way, there is a difference from the ſame diſpenſation towards others; for,

First

Firſt, It is ſo only in caſes of *extraordinary temptation.* When through the violence of temptation, and craft of Satan, they are hurryed from under the conduct of the Law of grace, God one way or other takes away their power, or may do ſo, that they ſhall not be able to execute what they had deſigned. But this is an ordinary way of dealing with wicked men. This hook of God is upon them in the whole courſe of their lives; and they ſtruggle with it, being as a wild Bull in a net, *Iſa.* 51. 20. Gods-*Net* is upon them, and they are filled with fury that they cannot do all the wickedneſs that they would.

Secondly, God doth it not to leave them to wreſtle with Sin, and to attempt other waies of its accompliſhment upon the failure of that which they were ingaged in, but by their diſappointment awakens them to conſider their condition, and what they are doing, and ſo *conſumes ſin in the womb* by the waies that ſhall afterwards be inſiſted on. Some Mens deprivation of power for the committing of conceived contrived ſin, hath been ſanctified to the changing of their hearts from all dalliances with that or other ſins.

Thirdly, God *providentially* hinders the bringing forth of conceived ſin, by oppoſing an *external hindering power* unto ſinners. He leaves them their lives, and leaves them power to do what they intend, only he raiſeth up an oppoſite power to coerce, forbid, and reſtrain them. An inſtance hereof we have, 1 *Sam.* 14. 35. *Saul* had ſworn that *Jonathan* ſhould be put to death, and as far as appears went on reſolutely to have ſlain him; God

ſtirs

ſtirs up the ſpirit of the People, they oppoſe themſelves to the wrath and fury of *Saul*, and *Jonathan* is delivered. So alſo 2 *Chron.* 26. 17, 18, 19. when King *Uzziah* would have in his own Perſon offered Incenſe contrary to the Law, *Eighty Men of the Prieſts* reſiſted him, and drove him out of the Temple. And to this head are to be referred all the aſſiſtances which God ſtirreth up for deliverance of his People againſt the fury of Perſecutors. He raiſeth *up Saviours* or Believers *on Mount Sion, to judge the Mount of Edom*; ſo Rev. 12. 16. The Dragon, and thoſe acting under him, ſpirited by him, were in a furious endeavour for the deſtruction of the Church; God ſtirs up the *Earth* to her aſſiſtance, even men of the world, not engaged with others in the deſign of Satan, and by their oppoſition hinders them from the execution of their deſigned rage. Of this nature, ſeems to be that dealing of God with his own People, *Hoſ.* 2. 6, 7. They were in the purſuit of their iniquities, following after their Lovers; God leaves them for a while to act in the folly of their ſpirits, but he ſets a *hedge*, and a *wall* before them that they ſhall not be able to fulfill their deſigns and luſts.

Fourthly, God obviates the accompliſhment of conceived ſin, by removing, or taking away the *objects* on whom, or about whom, the ſin conceived was to be committed. *Acts* 12. 11. yields us a ſignal Inſtance of this iſſue of Providence: When the day was coming wherein *Herod* thought to have ſlain *Peter* who was ſhut up in Priſon, God ſends and takes him away from their rage and lying

lying in wait. So alſo was our *Saviour* himſelf taken away from the murderous rage of the *Jews* before his hour was come, *Joh.*8.59. chap. 10. 39. Both *Primitive* and *latter* times are full of ſtories to this purpoſe: Priſon-doors have been opened, and poor Creatures appointed to die have been frequently reſcued from the Jaws of death. In the World it ſelf amongſt the men thereof, Adulterers and Adultereſſes, the ſin of the one is often hindred and ſtifled by the taking away of the other. So *wings* were given to the *woman* to carry her into the Wilderneſs and to diſappoint the World in the execution of their rage, *Rev.* 12. 14.

Fifthly, God doth this by ſome eminent *diverſions* of the thoughts of Men who had conceived ſin; *Gen.*37.24. The *Brethren of Joſeph* caſt him into a pit, with an intent to famiſh him there; whileſt they were as it ſeems, pleaſing themſelves with what they had done, God orders a Company of Merchants to come by, and diverts their thoughts with that new *object* from the *killing*, to the *ſelling* of their Brother, *verſ.*26,27. And how far therein they were ſubſervient to the infinitely wiſe Counſel of God, we know. Thus alſo when *Saul* was in the purſuit of *David*, and was even ready to prevail againſt him to his deſtruction. God ſtirs up the *Philiſtins* to invade the Land, which both diverted his thoughts; and drew the courſe of his actings another way, 1 *Sam.* 27. 27.

And theſe are *ſome of the waies* whereby God is pleaſed to hinder the bringing forth of *conceived ſin*, by oppoſing himſelf and his Providence to the

power

power of the ſinning Creature. And we may a little in our paſſage take a brief view of the great advantages to Faith, and the Church of God, which may be found in this matter. As,

Firſt, This may give us a little inſight into the ever to be adored Providence of God, by theſe and the like waies in great variety obſtructing the breaking forth of ſin in the World. It is he who makes thoſe dams, and ſhuts up thoſe flood-gates of corrupted Nature, that it ſhall not break forth in a deluge of filthy Abominations to overwhelm the Creation with confuſion and diſorder. As it was of old, ſo it is at this day; *Every thought and imagination of the heart of Man is evil, and that continually.* That all the Earth is not in all places filled with violence, as it was of old, is meerly from the mighty hand of God working effectually for the obſtructing of ſin. From hence alone it is, that the High-waies, Streets and Fields, are not all filled with violence, blood, rapine, uncleanneſs, and every villany that the heart of Man can conceive. O the infinite beauty of divine Wiſdom and Providence in the government of the World! For the Conſervation of it asks daily no leſs power and wiſdom than the firſt making of it did require.

Secondly, If we will look to our own Concernments, they will in a ſpecial manner inforce us to adore the wiſdom and efficacy of the Providence of God, in ſtopping the progreſs of *conceived ſin.* That we are at peace in our Houſes, at reſt in our Beds, that we have any quiet in our Enjoyments, is from hence alone: Whoſe Perſon would

would not be defiled, or deſtroyed? whoſe Habitation would not be ruined? whoſe blood almoſt would not be ſhed, if wicked Men had power to perpetrate all their conceived ſin? It may be the ruine of ſome of us hath been conceived a thouſand times. We are beholding to this Providence of obſtructing ſin, for our Lives, our Families, our Eſtates, our Liberties, for whatſoever is, or may be dear unto us. For may we not ſay ſometimes with the Pſalmiſt, *Pſal.* 57. 4. *My Soul is among Lyons, and I lie even among them that are ſet on fire, even the ſons of Men, whoſe teeth are ſpears and arrows, and their tongue a ſharp ſword.* And how is the deliverance of Men contrived from ſuch Perſons, *Pſal.* 58. 6. *God breaks their teeth in their mouths, even the great teeth of the young Lyons.* He keeps this fire from burning, or quencheth it when it's ready to break out into a flame. He breaks their ſpears and arrows, ſo that ſometimes we are not ſo much as wounded by them: Some he cuts off and deſtroyes, ſome he cuts ſhort in their power, ſome he deprives of the Inſtruments whereby alone they can work, ſome he prevents of their deſired opportunities, or diverts by other objects for their luſts, and oftentimes cauſeth them to ſpend them among themſelves one upon another. We may ſay therefore with the *Pſalmiſt*, *Pſal.* 104. 24. *O Lord, how manifold are thy works, in wiſdom haſt thou made them all, the Earth is full of thy Riches*; and with the Prophet, *Hoſ.* 14. 9. *Who is wiſe and he ſhall underſtand theſe things, prudent and he ſhall know them*; *all the waies of the Lord are right, and the*

Juſt

Juſt ſhall walk in them, but the Tranſgreſſors ſhall fall therein.

Thirdly, If theſe and the like are the ways whereby God obviates the bringing forth of conceived ſin in wicked Men, we may learn hence how miſerable their condition is, and in what perpetual *torment* for the moſt part they ſpend their daies: They are like a *troubled Sea*, ſaith the Lord, *that cannot reſt.* As they endeavour that others may have no peace, ſo it is certain that themſelves have not any; the principle of ſin is not impaired nor weakned in them, the will of ſinning is not taken away: They have a *Womb of ſin* that is able to *conceive* Monſters every moment. Yea, for the moſt part they are forging and framing folly all the day long: One luſt or other they are contriving how to ſatisfie; they are either devouring by malice and revenge, or vitiating by uncleanneſs, or trampling on by ambition, or ſwallowing down by covetouſneſs all that ſtand before them. Many of their follies and miſchiefs they bring to the very birth, and are in pain to be delivered; but God every day fills them with diſappointment, and *ſhuts up the womb* of ſin. Some are filled with hatred of Gods people all their daies, and never once have an opportunity to exerciſe it. So *David* deſcribes them, *Pſal.* 59. 6. *They return at evening, they make a noiſe like a Dog, and go round about the City. They go up and down and belch out with their mouths, ſwords are in their lips;* Verſ. 7. and yet are not able to accompliſh their deſigns: What torture do ſuch poor creatures live in? Envy, malice, wrath, revenge, devour their hearts by

not

not getting vent. And when God hath exerciſed the other acts of his wiſe Providence in cutting ſhort their power, or oppoſing a greater power to them when nothing elſe will doe, he cuts them off in their ſins, and to the grave they go fullof purpoſes of Iniquity. Others are no leſs hurryed and diverted by the power of other luſts which they are not able to ſatisfie: This is the ſore travail they are exerciſed with, all their dayes. If they accompliſh their deſigns, they are more wicked and helliſh than before; and if they do not, they are filled whith vexation and diſcontentment. This is the portion of them who know not the Lord, nor the power of his grace. Envy not their condition, notwithſtanding their outward glittering ſhew, their hearts are full of anxiety trouble and ſorrow.

Fourthly, Do we ſee ſometimes the flood-gates of Mens luſts and rage ſet open againſt the Church, and intereſt of it, and doth prevalency attend them, and power is for a ſeaſon on their ſide, let not the Saints of God deſpond. He hath unſpeakably various and effectual wayes for the *ſtifling of their conceptions* to give them dry breaſts and a miſcarrying womb. He can ſtop their fury when he pleaſeth; *Surely*, ſaith *David*, *the wrath of Man ſhall praiſe thee, the remainder of wrath ſhalt thou reſtrain*, Pſal. 76.10. When ſo much of their wrath is let out as ſhall exalt his praiſe, he can when he pleaſeth ſet up a power greater than the combined ſtrength of all ſinning Creatures, and reſtrain the remainder of the wrath that they had conceived. *He ſhall cut off the ſpirit of Princes,*

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He is terrible to the Kings of the earth, v. 12. Some he will cut off and deſtroy, ſome he will terrifie and affright, and prevent the rage of all. He can knock them on the head, or break out their teeth, or chain up their wrath, and who can oppoſe him?

Fifthly, Thoſe who have received benefit by any of the waies mentioned, may know to whom they owe their preſervation, and not look on it as a common thing. When you have *conceived ſin*, hath God weakened your power for ſin, or denied you opportunity, or took away the object of your luſts, or diverted your thoughts by new Providences, know aſſuredly that you have received mercy thereby. Though God deal not theſe providences alwaies in a ſubſerviency to the Covenant of Grace, yet there is always *mercy* in them, always a call in them to conſider the Author of them. Had not God thus dealt with you, it may be this day you ha been a terrour to your ſelves, a ſhame to your relations, and under the puniſhment due to ſome notorious ſins which you had *conceived*. Beſides, there is commonly an *additional guilt* in ſin brought forth, above what is in the meer conception of it. It may be others would have been ruined by it here, or drawn into a partnerſhip in ſin by it, and ſo have been eternally ruined by it, all which are prevented by theſe providences; and Eternity will witneſs, that there is a ſingularity of mercy in them. Do not look then on any ſuch things as common accidents, the hand of God is in them all; and that a merciful hand if not deſpiſed: if it be, yet God doth good to others by it,

the World is the better, and you are not so wicked as you would be.

Sixthly, We may also see hence the great use of *Magistracie* in the world, that great appointment of God. Amongst other things, it is peculiarly subservient to this holy Providence, in obstructing the bringing forth of *conceived sin*, namely by the terrour of him that bears the sword. God fixes that on the hearts of evil men which he expresseth, *Rom.* 13. 4. *If thou do that which is evil, be afraid, for the power beareth not the sword in vain, for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath on them that do evil.* God fixes this on the hearts of men, and by the dread and terrour of it *closeth the womb of sin*, that it shall not bring forth. When there was *no King in Israel*, none to put to rebuke, and none of whom evil men were afraid, there was woful work and havock amongst the children of men made in the world, as we may see in the last Chapters of the book of *Judges*. The greatest mercies and blessings that in this world we are made partakers of, next to them of the Gospel and Covenant of Grace, come to us through this channel and conduit. And indeed, this whereof we have been speaking, is the proper work of *Magistracy*, namely to be subservient to the providence of God in obstructing the bringing forth of conceived sin.

These then are some of the waies whereby God *providentially* prevents the *bringing forth of sin*, by opposing obstacles to the *power* of the sinner. And by them sin is not consumed, but shut up in the womb. Men are not burthened *for* it, but *with* it;

nor

not laden in their hearts and conſciences with its *guilt*, but perplexed with it *power*, which they are not able to exert and ſatisfie.

The way that yet remains for conſideration whereby God obviates the production of *conceived ſin*, is his working on the *Will* of the ſinners, ſo making ſin to conſume away in the womb.

There are two waies in general whereby God thus prevents the bringing forth of conceived ſin, by working *on the will of the ſinner*; and they are, firſt, by *Reſtraining Grace*; ſecondly, by *Renewing Grace*. He doth it ſometimes the one way, ſometimes the other. The firſt of theſe is common to regenerate and unregenerate perſons, the latter peculiar to believers; and God doth it variouſly as to particulars by them both. We ſhall begin with the firſt of them.

Firſt, God doth this in the way of reſtraining grace by ſome *arrow of particular conviction*, fixed in the heart and conſcience of the ſinner, in reference unto the particular ſin which he had conceived. This ſtaggers and changes the mind, as to the particular intended, cauſeth the hands to hang down, and the weapons of luſt to fall out of them. Hereby *conceived ſin* proves abortive. How God doth this work, by what immediate touches, ſtrokes, blows, rebukes of his Spirit; by what reaſonings, arguments, and commotions of mens own conſciences, is not for us throughly to find out. It is done, as was ſaid, in unſpeakable variety, and the works of God are paſt finding out. But as to what light may be given unto it from Scripture inſtances, after we have manifeſted the

general way of Gods procedure, it shall be insisted on.

Thus then God dealt in the case of *Esau* and *Jacob*. *Esau* had long conceived his brothers death, he comforted himself with the thoughts of it, and resolutions about it, *Gen.*27.41. As is the manner of profligate sinners. Upon his first opportunity he comes forth to execute his intended rage, and *Jacob* concludes that he would *smite the mother with the children*, Gen. 32.11. An opportunity is presented unto this wicked and profane person, to *bring forth that sin* that had laid in his heart now *twenty years*; he hath full power in his hand to perform his purpose. In the midst of this posture of things, God comes in upon his heart with some secret and effectual working of his Spirit and power, changeth him from his purpose, causeth his conceived sin to melt away, that he falls upon the neck of him with embraces, whom he thought to have slain.

Of the same nature, though the way of it was peculiar, was his dealing with *Laban* the *Syrian*, in reference to the same *Jacob*, *Gen.* 31. 24. By a dream, a vision in the night, God hinders him from so much as speaking roughly to him. It was with him as in *Micah* 2. 1. he had devised evil on his bed, and when he thought to have practised it in the morning, God interposed in a dream, and hides sin from him, as he speaks, *Job* 33. 15, 16, 17. To the same purpose is that of the *Psalmist* concerning the people of God, *Psal.*106. 46. *He made them to be pitied of all those who carried them captives.* Men usually deal in rigour with those

thoſe whom they have taken captive in war. It was the way of old to rule captives with force and cruelty. Here God turns and changes their hearts, not in general unto himſelf, but to this particular of reſpect to his people. And this way in general doth God every day prevent the bringing forth of a world of ſin. He *ſharpens arrows* of conviction upon the ſpirits of men, as to the particular that they are engaged in. Their *hearts* are not changed as to ſin, but their *minds* are altered as to this or that ſin. They break, it may be, the veſſel they had faſhioned, and go to work upon ſome other. Now that we may a little ſee into the waies whereby God doth accompliſh this work, we muſt premiſe the enſuing conſiderations.

Firſt, That the general *medium* wherein the matter of *reſtraining grace* doth conſiſt, whereby God thus prevents the bringing forth of ſin, doth lie in certain *Arguments* and Reaſonings, preſented to the mind of the ſinner, whereby he is induced to deſert his purpoſe, to change and alter his mind, as to the ſin he had conceived. Reaſons againſt it are preſented unto him, which prevail upon him to relinquiſh his deſign, and give over his purpoſe. This is the general way of the working of reſtraining grace, it is by *arguments* and reaſonings riſing up againſt the perpetration of conceived ſin.

Secondly, That no *Arguments* or Reaſonings, as ſuch, *materially* conſidered, are ſufficient to ſtop or hinder any purpoſe of ſinning, or to cauſe conceived ſin to prove abortive, if the ſinner have power and opportunity to bring it forth. They

are not in themſelves, and on their own account *reſtraining grace*; for if they were, the Adminiſtration and Communication of grace, as grace, were left unto every man who is able to give advice againſt ſin. Nothing is nor can be called *grace*, though common, and ſuch as may periſh, but with reſpect unto its peculiar relation to God. God by the power of his Spirit making *arguments* and reaſons effectual and prevailing, turns that to be *grace*, I mean of this kind, which in it ſelf, and in its own nature was bare reaſon. And that efficacy of the Spirit, which the Lord puts forth in theſe perſwaſions and motives is that which we call *reſtraining grace*. Theſe things being premiſed, we ſhall now conſider ſome of the *Arguments* which we find that he hath made uſe of to this end and purpoſe.

Firſt, God ſtops many men in their waies upon the conception of ſin, by an argument taken from the *difficulty*, if not impoſſibility of doing that they aim at. They have a mind unto it, but God ſets an hedge and a wall before them, that they ſhall judge it to be ſo hard and *difficult* to accompliſh what they intend, that it is better for them to let it alone and give over. Thus *Herod* would have put *John Baptiſt* to death upon the firſt provocation, but he *feared the multitude*, becauſe they accounted him as a *Prophet*, *Matth.* 14.5. He had conceived his murder, and was free for the execution of it, God raiſed this conſideration in his heart, If I kill him, the people will tumultuate, he hath a great party amongſt them, and ſedition will ariſe that may coſt me my life, or Kingdom.

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He *feared the multitude*, and durſt not execute the wickedneſs he had conceived, becauſe of the *difficulty* he fore-ſaw he ſhould be entangled withal. And God made the argument effectual for the ſeaſon; for otherwiſe we know that men will venture the utmoſt hazards for the ſatisfaction of their luſts; as he alſo did afterwards. The *Phariſees* were in the very ſame ſtate and condition, *Matth.* 21. 26. they would fain have decried the Miniſtry of *John*, but durſt not for fear of the people: and *ver.* 46. of the ſame Chapter, by the ſame argument were they deterred from *killing our Saviour*, who had highly provoked them by a Parable, ſetting out their deſerved and approaching deſtruction. They durſt not do it for *fear of a tumult* among the people, ſeeing they looked on him as a Prophet. Thus God over-awes the hearts of innumerable perſons in the world every day, and cauſeth them to deſiſt from attempting to bring forth the ſins which they had conceived. *Difficulties* they ſhall be ſure to meet withal, yea, it is likely, if they ſhould attempt it, it would prove impoſſible for them to accompliſh. We owe much of our *quiet* in this world, unto the efficacy given to this conſideration in the hearts of men by the Holy Ghoſt: Adulteries, rapins, murders, are obviated and ſtifled by it. Men would engage into them daily, but that they judge it impoſſible for them to fulfill what they aim at.

Secondly, God doth it by an Argument taken *ab incommodo*, from the *inconveniencies*, evils, and troubles that will befall men in the purſuit of ſin. If they follow it, this or that *inconvenience* will

enſue; this trouble, this evil, temporal or eternal. And this Argument, as managed by the Spirit of God, is the great engine in his hand whereby he caſts up banks, and gives bounds to the luſts of men, that they break not out to the confuſion of all that order and beauty which yet remains in the works of his hands. *Paul* gives us the general import of this argument, *Rom.* 2. 14, 15. *For when the Gentiles which have not the Law, do by nature the things contained in the Law, theſe having not the Law, are a Law unto themſelves, which ſhew the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conſcience alſo bearing witneſs, and their thoughts the mean while accuſing, or elſe excuſing one another.* If any men in the world may be thought to be given up to purſue and fulfill all the ſins that their luſts can conceive, it is thoſe that *have not the Law*, to whom the written Law of God doth not denounce the evil that attends it. But though they have it not, ſaith the Apoſtle, they *ſhew forth the work of it*, they do many things which it requireth, and forbear or abſtain from many things that it forbiddeth, and ſo ſhew forth its work and efficacy. But whence is it that they ſo do? Why their *thoughts accuſe or excuſe them.* It is from the conſideration and arguings that they have within themſelves about ſin, and its *conſequents*, which prevail upon them to abſtain from many things that their hearts would carry them out unto. For *Conſcience* is a mans prejudging of himſelf, with reſpect unto the future judgement of God. Thus *Felix* was ſtaggered in his purſuit of ſin, when he trembled at *Pauls* preaching of righteouſneſs and judge-

judgement to come, *Act.* 24. 25. So *Job* tells us, that the conſideration of *puniſhment from God*, hath a ſtrong influence on the minds of men to keep them from ſin, *chap.* 31. 1, 2, 3. How the Lord makes uſe of that conſideration, even towards his own, when they have broken the cords of his love, and caſt off the rule of his grace for a ſeaſon, I have before declared.

Thirdly, God doth this ſame work, by making effectual an *Argument*, *ab inutili*, from the *unprofitableneſs* of the thing that men are engaged in. By this were the *Brethren* of *Joſeph* ſtayed from ſlaying him, *Gen.*37.26,27. *What profit is it*, ſay they, *if we ſlay our Brother and conceal his blood?* We ſhall get nothing by it, it will bring in no advantage or ſatisfaction unto us. And the heads of this way of Gods obſtructing conceived ſin, or the ſprings of theſe kinds of Arguments, are ſo many and various, that it is impoſſible to inſiſt particularly upon them. There is nothing preſent, or to come, nothing belonging to this life, or another, nothing deſirable or undeſirable, nothing good or evil, but at one time or another, an Argument may be taken from it for the obſtructing of ſin.

Fourthly, God accompliſheth this work by *Arguments* taken *ab honeſto*, from what is *good* and *honeſt*, what is comely, praiſe-worthy, and acceptable unto himſelf. This is the great road wherein he walks with the Saints under their temptations, or in their conceptions of ſin. He recovers effectually upon their minds a conſideration of all thoſe ſprings and motives to obedience, which are diſcovered and propoſed in the Goſpel,

ſpel, ſome at one time, ſome at another. He minds them of his own love, mercy, and kindneſs; his *eternal Love*, with the fruits of it, whereof themſelves have been made partakers. He minds them of the *blood of his Son*, his Croſs, ſufferings, tremendous undertaking in the work of mediation, and the concernment of his Heart, Love, Honour, Name, in their obedience. Minds them of the *Love of the Spirit*, with all his Conſolations which they have been made partakers of, and priviledges wherewith by him they have been entruſted. Minds them of the *Goſpel*, the glory and beauty of it as revealed unto their ſouls. Minds them of the excellency and comelineſs of *Obedience*, of their performance of that duty they owe to God, that peace, quietneſs, and ſerenity of mind that they have enjoyed therein. On the other ſide, he minds them of being a *provocation by ſin* unto the eyes of his glory, ſaying in their hearts, *Do not that abominable thing which my ſoul hateth.* Minds them of their *wounding* the Lord Chriſt, and putting him to ſhame; of their *grieving* the holy Spirit, whereby they are ſealed to the day of redemption; of their *defiling* his dwelling place. Minds them of the reproach, diſhonours, ſcandal which they bring on the Goſpel and the profeſſion thereof. Minds them of the *terrours*, darkneſs, wounds, want of peace, that they may bring upon their own ſouls. From theſe and the like conſiderations doth God put a ſtop to the progreſs of the Law of ſin in the heart, that it ſhall not go on to *bring forth* the evil which it hath conceived. I could give inſtances in *Arguments* of all theſe ſeveral kinds

kinds recorded in the Scripture, but it would be too long a work for us, who are now engaged in a deſign of another nature. But one or two examples may be mentioned. *Joſeph* reſiſts his firſt temptation on one of theſe accounts, *Gen.* 39. 9. *How can I do this great wickedneſs and ſin againſt God?* The evil of *ſinning againſt God*, his God, that conſideration alone detains him from the leaſt inclination to his temptation. It is *ſin againſt God* to whom I owe all obedience, the God of my life, and of all my mercies, I will not do it. The Argument wherewith *Abigail* prevailed on *David*, 1 *Sam.* 25. 31. to with-hold him from *ſelf-revenge* and murder, was of the ſame nature, and he acknowledgeth that it was from the Lord, *ver.* 32. I ſhall add no more, for all the Scripture motives which we have to duty, made effectual by grace, are inſtances of this way of Gods procedure.

Sometimes, I confeſs, God ſecretly works the hearts of men by his own finger, without the uſe and means of ſuch Arguments as thoſe inſiſted on, to ſtop the progreſs of ſin. So he tells *Abimelech*, *Gen.* 20. 6. *I have with-held thee from ſinning againſt me.* Now this could not be done by any of the Arguments which we have inſiſted on, becauſe *Abimelech* knew not that the thing which he intended was ſin; and therefore he pleads that in the *integrity of his heart and innocency of his hands* he did it, *ver.* 5. God turned about his will and thoughts, that he ſhould not accompliſh his intention; but by what waies or means is not revealed. Nor is it evident what courſe he took in the change of *Eſaus* heart, when he came out againſt his

his Brother to deſtroy him, *Gen.* 33. 4. whether he ſtirr'd up in him a freſh ſpring of natural affections, or cauſed him to conſider what grief by this means he ſhould bring to his aged Father, who loved him ſo tenderly; or whether being now grown great and wealthy, he more and more deſpiſed the matter of difference between him and his Brother, and ſo utterly ſlighted it, it is not known. It may be God did it by an *immediate* powerful act of his Spirit upon his heart, without the actual intervening of any of theſe or the like conſiderations. Now though the things mentioned are in themſelves at other times *feeble* and weak, yet when they are managed by the Spirit of God to ſuch an end and purpoſe, they certainly become *effectual*, and are the matter of his *preventing grace*.

Secondly, God prevents the bringing forth of conceived ſin by *real ſpiritual ſaving grace*, & that either in the firſt converſion of ſinners, or in the following ſupplies of it. This is one part of the myſterie of his grace and love. He meets men ſometimes in their higheſt reſolutions for ſin, with the higheſt efficacy of his grace. Hereby he manifeſts the *power* of his own grace, and gives the ſoul a farther experience of the *Law of ſin*, when it takes ſuch a fare-well of it, as to be changed in the midſt of its reſolutions to ſerve the luſts thereof. By this he melts down the luſts of men, cauſeth them to wither at the root, that they ſhall no more ſtrive to bring forth what they have *conceived*, but be filled with ſhame and ſorrow at their conception. An example and inſtance of this proceeding

proceeding of God, for the uſe and inſtruction of all generations we have in *Paul*. His heart was full of wickedneſs, blaſphemy, and perſecution; his conception of them was come unto rage and madneſs, and a full purpoſe of exerciſing them all to the utmoſt; ſo the ſtory relates it, *Acts* 9. ſo himſelf declares the ſtate to have been with him, *Acts* 26. 9, 10, 11, 12. 1 *Tim.* 1. 13. In the midſt of all this violent purſuit of ſin, a *voice from heaven* ſhuts up the womb, and dries the breaſts of it, and he cries, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* Acts 9. 6. The ſame perſon ſeems to intimate, that this is the way of Gods procedure with others, even to meet them with his *converting grace* in the height of their ſin and folly, 1 *Tim.* 1. 16. For *he himſelf*, he ſaies, was a pattern of Gods dealing with others; as he dealt with him, ſo alſo would he do with ſome ſuch like ſinners. *For this cauſe I obtained mercy, that in me firſt Jeſus Chriſt might ſhew forth all long-ſuffering, as a pattern to them which ſhould hereafter believe on him to life everlaſting.* And we have not a few examples of it in our own daies. Sundry perſons on ſet purpoſe going to this or that place, to deride and ſcoff at the diſpenſation of the Word, have been met withal in the very place wherein they deſigned to ſerve their luſts and Satan, and have been caſt down at the foot of God. This way of Gods dealing with ſinners is at large ſet forth, *Job* 33. 15, 16, 17, 18. *Dionyſius* the *Areopagite* is another inſtance of this work of Gods grace and love. *Paul* is dragged either *by* him, or *before* him, to plead for his life, as a ſetter forth of *ſtrange gods*, which at

Athens

Athens was death by the Law. In the midſt of this frame of ſpirit God meets with him by *converting grace*, ſin withers in the womb, and he cleaves to *Paul* and his doctrine, *Acts* 17, 18--34. The like diſpenſation towards *Iſrael* we have, *Hoſ.* 11. 7, 8, 9, 10. But there is no need to inſiſt on more inſtances of this obſervation. God is pleaſed to leave no Generation unconvinced of this truth, if they do but attend to their own experiences, and the examples of this work of his mercy amongſt them. Every day, one or other, is taken in the fulneſs of the purpoſe of his heart to go on in ſin, in this or that ſin, and is ſtopt in his courſe by the power of *converting grace*.

Secondly, God doth it by the ſame grace in the *renewed communications* of it, that is, by ſpecial *aſſiſting grace*. This is the common way of his dealing with *Believers* in this caſe. That they alſo through the deceitfulneſs of ſin, may be carryed on to the conceiving of this or that ſin, was before declared. God puts a ſtop to their progreſs, or rather to the prevalency of the Law of ſin in them, and that by giving in unto them ſpecial aſſiſtances needful for their preſervation and deliverance. As *David* ſaies of himſelf, *Pſa.* 73. 2. *His feet were almoſt gone, his ſteps had well nigh ſlipt*; he was at the very brink of unbelieving, deſpairing thoughts, and concluſions about Gods providence in the government of the world; from whence he was recovered, as he afterwards declares. So is it with many a Believer, he is oftentimes at the very brink, at the very door of ſome folly or iniquity, when God puts in by the efficacy

cacy of *actually aſſiſting grace*, and recovers them to an obediential frame of heart again. And this is a peculiar work of Chriſt, wherein he manifeſts and exerts his faithfulneſs towards his own. *Heb.* 2. 18. *He is able to ſuccour them that are tempted.* It is not an abſolute power, but a power cloathed with mercy, that is intended. Such a power as is put forth from a ſenſe of the ſuffering of poor Believers under their temptations. And how doth he exerciſe this *merciful ability* towards us? *chap.* 4. 16. He gives forth, and we find in him *Grace to help in a time of need*; ſeaſonable help and aſſiſtance for our deliverance, when we are ready to be over-powered by ſin and temptation. When *luſt hath conceived*, and is ready to *bring forth*, when the ſoul lies at the brink of ſome iniquity, he gives in *ſeaſonable help*, relief, deliverance, and ſafety. Here lies a great part of the care and faithfulneſs of Chriſt towards his poor Saints: he will not ſuffer them to be worried with the power of ſin, nor to be carried out unto waies that ſhall diſhonour the Goſpel, or fill them with ſhame and reproach, and ſo render them uſeleſs in the world; but he ſteps in with the ſaving relief and *aſſiſtance* of his grace, ſtops the courſe of ſin, and makes them *in himſelf more than conquerors*. And this aſſiſtance lies under the Promiſe, 1 *Cor.* 10. 13. *There hath no temptation taken you but ſuch as is common to man, but God is faithful who will not ſuffer you to be tempted above that you are able, but will with the temptation alſo make a way to eſcape, that you may be able to bear it.* Temptation ſhall try us, it is for our good; many holy ends doth the Lord compaſs

compaſs and bring about by it. But when we are tried to the utmoſt of our ability, ſo that one aſſault more would over-bear us, a *way of eſcape* is provided. And as this may be done ſeveral waies, as I have elſe-where declared, ſo this we are now upon is one of the moſt eminent, namely by *ſupplies of grace*, to enable the ſoul to bear up, reſiſt, and conquer. And when once God begins to deal in this way of love with a ſoul, he will not ceaſe to add one ſupply after another, until the whole work of his grace and faithfulneſs be accompliſhed. An example hereof we have, *Iſa.* 57. 17, 18. poor ſinners there are ſo far captivated to the power of their luſts that the firſt and ſecond dealings of God with them are not effectual for their delivery; but he will not give over, he is in the purſuit of a deſign of love towards them, and ſo ceaſeth not until they are recovered. Theſe are the general heads of the ſecond way whereby God hinders the bringing forth of conceived ſin, namely by working on the *Will* of the ſinner. He doth it either by *common convictions*, or *ſpecial grace*, ſo that of their own accord they ſhall let go the purpoſe and will of ſinning, that they are riſen up unto. And this is no mean way of his providing for his own glory, and the honour of his Goſpel in the world, whoſe Profeſſors would ſtain the whole beauty of it, were they left to themſelves to bring forth all the evil that is *conceived* in their hearts.

Beſides theſe *general* waies, there is one yet more *ſpecial*, that at once worketh both upon the *Power* and *Will* of the ſinner; and this is the way of *afflictions*, concerning which one word ſhall cloſe this

this diſcourſe. *Afflictions*, I ſay, work by both theſe ways, in reference unto *conceived ſin*. They work *providentially* on the *power* of the creature. When a man hath conceived a ſin, and is in full purpoſe of the purſuit of it, God oftentimes ſends a *ſickneſs* and abates his ſtrength, or a *loſs* cuts him ſhort in his plenty, and ſo takes him off from the purſuit of his luſts, though it may be his heart is not weaned from them. His *power* is weakned, and he cannot do the evil he would. In this ſenſe it belongs to the firſt way of Gods obviating the production of ſin. Great *afflictions* work ſometimes, not from their own nature immediately and directly, but from the gracious purpoſe and intendment of him that ſends them. He inſinuates into the diſpenſation of them that of grace and power, of love and kindneſs, which ſhall effectually take off the heart and mind from ſin. *Pſal.* 119. 67. *Before I was afflicted I went aſtray, but now have I learned thy commandments.* And in this way, becauſe of the predominancy of renewing and aſſiſting grace, they belong unto the latter means of preventing ſin.

And theſe are ſome of the ways, whereby it pleaſeth God to put a ſtop to the *progreſs of ſin*, both in Believers and Unbelievers, which at preſent we ſhall inſtance in; and if we would endeavour farther to ſearch out his ways unto perfection, yet we muſt ſtill conclude that it is but a *little portion which we know of him*.

CHAP. XIV.

The Power of Sin farther demonstrated by the Effects it hath had in the Lives of Professors. First in actual sins. Secondly in habitual Declensions.

WE are now to proceed unto other Evidences of that sad truth which we are in the demonstration of. But the main of our work being past through, I shall be more brief in the management of the Arguments that do remain.

That then which in the next place may be fixed upon, is the demonstration which this Law of sin hath in all Ages given of its power and efficacy, by the woful fruits that it hath brought forth, even in Believers themselves. Now these are of two sorts. First, the great *actual eruptions* of sin in their Lives. Secondly, Their *habitual declensions* from the frames, state and condition of Obedience and Communion with God, which they had obtained, both which by the Rule of *James* before unfolded, are to be laid to the account of this Law of sin, and belong unto the fourth head of its progress, and are both of them convincing evidences of its power and efficacy.

First, Consider the fearful *Eruptions* of actual sins that have been in the Lives of Believers, and we shall find our Position evidenced. Should I go

go through at large with this Conſideration, I muſt recount all the ſad and ſcandalous failings of the Saints that are left on record in the holy Scripture. But the particulars of them are known to all; ſo that I ſhall not need to mention them, nor the many aggravations that in their circumſtances they are attended with: Only ſome few things tending to the rendring of our preſent conſideration of them uſeful, may be remarked. As,

Firſt, They are moſt of them in the Lives of men that were not of the *loweſt form* or ordinary ſort of Believers, but of men that had a peculiar *eminency* in them on the account of their walking with God in their Generation. Such were *Noah*, *Lot*, *David*, *Hezekiah*, and others. They were not men of an ordinary ſize, but higher than their Brethren by the ſhoulders and upwards in Profeſſion, yea in real Holineſs. And ſurely that muſt needs be of a mighty efficacy that could hurry ſuch *Giants* in the wayes of God into ſuch abominable ſins as they fell into. An ordinary Engine could never have turned them out of the courſe of their obedience. It was a poyſon that no *Athletick* conſtitution of ſpiritual health, no *Antidote* could withſtand.

Secondly, And theſe very men, fell not into their great ſins at the *beginning of their profeſſion*, when they had had but little experience of the goodneſs of God, of the ſweetneſs and pleaſantneſs of Obedience, of the power and craft of ſin, of its impulſions, ſolicitations and ſurprizals, but after a long courſe of walking with God, and acquaintance with all theſe things, together with

innumerable motives unto *watchfulness*. *Noah* according to the lives of men in those dayes of the World, had walked uprightly with God some *hundreds of years* before he was so surprised as he was, *Gen.*9. Righteous *Lot* seems to have been towards the end of his days, ere he defiled himself with the abominations recorded. *David* in a short Life, had as much experience of Grace and Sin, and as much close spiritual Communion with God as ever had any of the Sons of men, before he was cast to the ground by this Law of sin. So was it with *Hezekiah* in his degree, which was none of the meanest. Now to set upon such persons, so well acquainted with its power and deceit, so armed and provided against it, that had been conquerours over it for so many years, and to prevail against them, it argues a power and efficacy too *mighty* for every thing but the spirit of the *Almighty* to withstand. Who can look to have a greater stock of *Inherent Grace* than those men had; to have more experience of God, and the excellency of his wayes, the sweetness of his love, and of communion with him than they had; who hath either better furniture to oppose sin withal, or more obligation so to do, than they? and yet we see how fearfully they were prevailed against.

Thirdly, As if God had permitted their Falls on set purpose, that we might learn to be wary of this powerful enemy, they all of them fell out when they had *newly received great & stupendious mercies* from the hand of God, that ought to have been strong Obligations unto diligence and watchfulness

fulness in close obedience. *Noah* was but newly come forth of that *world of waters* wherein he saw the ungodly world perishing for their sins, and himself preserved by that astonishable Miracle which all Ages must admire: Whilest the Worlds desolation, was an hourly remembrancer unto him of his strange preservation by the immediate care and hand of God, he falls into *Drunkenness*. *Lot* had newly seen that which every one that thinks on cannot but tremble. He saw, as one speaks, *Hell coming out of Heaven* upon unclean sinners, the greatest evidence, except the Cross of Christ, that God ever gave in his Providence of the Judgment to come. He saw himself and Children delivered by the special care and miraculous hand of God; and yet whilest these strange mercies were fresh upon him, he fell into *Drunkenness and Incest*. *David* was delivered out of all his troubles and had the necks of his Enemies given him round about, and he makes use of his Peace from a world of tryals and troubles to contrive *Murder and Adultery*. Immediately, it was, after *Hezekiahs* great and miraculos deliverance that he falls into his *carnal pride and boasting*. I say, their falls in such seasons, seem to be permitted on set purpose, to instruct us all in the Truth that we have in hand; so that no persons, in no seasons, with wht furniture of Grace soever, can promise themselves security from its prevalency, any other wayes, than by keeping close constantly to him, who hath supplies to give out that are above its reach and efficacy. Methinks this should make us look about us. Are we better than *Noah*, who had that

testimony from God, that he was a *perfect man in his Generation, and walked with God?* Are we better than *Lot*, whose Righteous Soul was vexed with the evil deeds of ungodly men, and is thereof commended by the Holy Ghost? Are we more holy, wise, and watchful than *David*, who obtained this testimony, that he was *a man after Gods own heart?* Or better than *Hezekiah*, who appealed to God himself, that he had served him uprightly with a perfect heart? and yet what prevalency this Law of sin wrought in and over them, we see. And there is no end of the like examples; they are all set up as *Buoys* to discover unto us the Sands, the Shelves, the Rocks, whereupon they made their shipwrack, to their hazard, danger, loss, yea and would have done to their ruine, had not God been pleased in his faithfulness graciously to prevent it. And this is the first part of this Evidence of the power of sin, from its effects.

Secondly, It manifests its *power* in the *habitual declensions* from zeal & holiness, from the frame, state and condition of Obedience and Communion with God, whereunto they had attained, which are found in many Believers. *Promises of growth* and improvement are many, and precious; the *Means* excellent and effectual; the *benefits* great and unspeakable: Yet it often falls out, that instead hereof, decays and declensions are found upon Professors, yea in and upon many of the Saints of God. Now whereas this must needs principally and chiefly be from the strength and efficacy of indwelling sin, and is therefore a great

evidence

evidence thereof; I ſhall firſt evince the Obſervation it ſelf to be true; namely, That ſome of the *Saints themſelves* do oftentimes ſo decline from that growth & pimrovement in faith, grace, & holineſs which might juſtly be expected from them; and then ſhew that the cauſe of this evil liesin that, that we are treating of. And that it is the cauſe of *total Apoſtaſie* in unſound Profeſſors, ſhall be after declared. But this is a greater work which we have in hand. The prevailing upon *true Believers* unto a ſinful declenſion & *gradual Apoſtaſie*, requires a putting forth of more ſtrength and efficacy, than the prevailing upon *unſound Profeſſors* unto *total Apoſtaſie*. As the wind which will blow down a *dead tree* that hath no root, to the ground, will ſcarcely ſhake or bow a living *well-rooted tree*. But this it will do. There is mention made in the Scripture of the Firſt wayes of *David*, and they are commended above *his later*, 2 *Chron.* 17. 3. The *laſt wayes* even of *David* were tainted with the power of *In-dwelling Sin*. Though we have mention only of the actual eruption of ſin, yet that uncleanneſs, and *pride* which was working in him in his Numbring of the People; were certainly rooted ina *declenſion* from his firſt frame. Thoſe ruſhes did not grow without mire. *David* would not have done ſo in his *younger days*, when he followed God in the wilderneſs of temptations and tryals, full of faith, love, humility, brokenneſs of heart, zeal, tender affection unto all the Ordinances of God, all which were eminent in him. But his ſtrength is impaired by the efficacy and deceitfulneſ, of ſin;

his *Locks* cut, and he becomes a prey to vile Lusts and Temptations. We have a notable Instance in most of the Churches that our Saviour awakens to the consideration of their condition, in the Revelations: We may single out one of them: Many good things there were in the Church of *Ephesus*, *Chap.* 2. 2, 3. for which it is greatly commended; but yet it is charged with a *decay*, a *declension*, a gradual falling off and Apostasie, *ver.* 4, 5. *Thou hast left thy first Love, remember therefore whence thou art fallen, and do thy first works.* There was a decay both *Inward* in the frame of heart, as to faith, and love, and *outward* as to obedience and works, in comparison of what they had formerly, by the testimony of Christ himself. The same also might be shewed concerning the rest of those *Churches*, only one or two of them excepted. *Five* of them are charged with decays and declensions. Hence there is mention in the Scripture of the *Kindness of Youth*, of the *Love of Espousals*, with great commendation, *Jer.* 2. 2, 3. of our *first Faith*, 1 *Tim.* 5. 12. of the *beginning of our confidence*, *Heb.* 3. 14. And cautions are given, that we *lose not the things that we have wrought*, 2 *John* 8. But what need we look back or search for Instances to confirm the truth of this Observation? An *habitual declension* from first Ingagements unto God, from first Attainments of Communion with God, from first strictness in Duties of Obedience, is ordinary and common amongst Professors. Might we to this purpose take a general view of the Professors in these Nations, among whom the Lot of the best of us will

will be found in part or in whole, in ſomewhat or in all, to fall, we might be plentifully convinced of the truth of this Obſervation. Is their *Zeal* for God as warm, living, vigorous, effectual, ſolicitous, as it was in their firſt giving themſelves unto God? Or rather, is there not a common, ſlight, ſelfiſh frame of ſpirit in the room of it come upon moſt Profeſſors? iniquity hath abounded, and their love hath waxed cold. Was it not of old a burthen to their ſpirits to hear the Name, and wayes, and Worſhip of God blaſphemed and profaned? could they not have ſaid with the Pſalmiſt, *Pſ.*119.136. *Rivers of water run down our eyes becauſe men keep not thy Law?* Were not their ſouls ſolicitous about the Intereſt of Chriſt in the World, like *Eli*'s about the Ark? Did they not contend earneſtly for the *Truth once delivered to the Saints*, and every parcel of it? eſpecially wherein the grace of God, and the glory of the Goſpel was eſpecially concerned: Did they not labour to judge and condemn the World by an *holy* and *ſeparate* converſation? And do now the generality of Profeſſors abide in this frame? have they grown, and made improvement in it? or is there not a coldneſs and indifferency grown upon the ſpirits of many in this thing? Yea, do not many deſpiſe all theſe things, and look upon their own former Zeal, as folly? May we not ſee many who have formerly been of eſteem in ways of Profeſſion, become daily a ſcorn and reproach through their miſcarriages, and that juſtly, to the men of the World? Is it not with them as it was of old with the Daughters of *Sion*, (*Iſa.*3.24.)

when

when God judged them for their ſins and wantonneſs? Hath not the World, and *ſelf* utterly ruined their Profeſſion? and are they not regardleſs of the things wherein they have formerly declared a ſingular concernment? Yea, are not *ſome* come partly on one pretenſe, partly on another, to an open *enmity* unto, and hatred of the wayes of God? they pleaſe them no more, but are evil in their eyes. But not to mention ſuch *open Apoſtates* any farther, whoſe Hypocriſie the Lord Jeſus Chriſt will ſhortly judge; how is it with the beſt? are not almoſt all men grown cold and ſlack as to theſe things? are they not leſs concerned in them than formerly? are they not grown weary, ſelfiſh in their Religion, and ſo things be *indifferent well* at home, ſcarce care how thy go abroad in the world? At leaſt do they not prefer their eaſe, credit, ſafety, ſecular advantages before theſe things? A frame that Chriſt abhors, and declares, that thoſe in whom it prevails are none of his: Some indeed ſeem to retain a good zeal for Truth, but wherein they make the faireſt appearance, therein will they be found to be moſt abominable: They cry out againſt *Errors*, not for Truth, but for Parties and Intereſts ſake. Let a man be on their *Party*, and promote their Intereſt, be he never ſo *corrupt* in his Judgment, he is embraced, and it may be admired. This is not *zeal for God*, but for a mans ſelf. It is not *the Zeal of thine Houſe hath eaten me up*, but, *Maſter, forbid them becauſe they follow not with us.* Better it were doubtleſs for men never to pretend unto any *Zeal* at all, than to ſubſtitute ſuch warthful ſelfiſhneſs in the room of it.

Secondly,

Secondly, Is mens *delight* in the Ordinances & Worſhip of God the ſame as in former days? Do they find the ſame ſweetneſs and *reliſh* in them as they have done of old? How *precious* hath the *Word* been to them formerly? What joy and delight have they had in attendance thereon? How would they have run and gone to have been made partakers of it, where it was diſpenced in its power and purity, in the *evidence and demonſtration* of the Spirit? Did they not call the *Sabbath* their delight, and was not the approach of it a real joy unto their Souls? Did they not long after the converſe and communion of Saints? and could they not undergo manifold perils for the attainment of it? And doth this frame ſtill abide upon them? are there not decays and declenſions to be found amongſt them? May it not be ſaid, *Gray hairs are here and there upon them, and they perceive it not?* Yea, are not men ready to ſay with them of old, *What a wearineſs is it? Mal.* 1.3. It is even a *burthen and a wearineſs* to be tied up to the obſervation of all theſe Ordinances. Wha need we be all out ſo ſtrict in the obſervation of the *Sabbath?* What need we hear ſo often? What need this diſtinction in hearing? Inſenſibly a great diſreſpect, yea, even a contempt of the pleaſant and excellent ways of Chriſt and his Goſpel, is fallen upon many Profeſſors.

Thirdly, May not the ſame conviction be farther carried on, by an enquiry into the *univerſal courſe of obedience*, and the performance of duties that men have been engaged in. Is there the ſame *conſcientious tenderneſs of ſinning* abiding in many

as

as was in dayes of old? the same exact performance of *private duties?* The same love to the brethren? the same readiness for the Cross? the same humility of mind and spirit? the same self-denial? The steam of mens lusts, wherewith the air is tainted, will not suffer us so to say.

We need then go no farther than this wretched Generation wherein we live, to evince the truth of the observation laid down, as the foundation of the instance insisted on, the Lord give repentance before it be too late.

Now all these *declensions*, all these decays that are found in some Professors, they all proceed from this root and cause, they are all the product of *Indwelling sin*, and all evince the exceeding power and efficacy of it. For the proof whereof I shall not need to go farther than the *general rule* which out of *James* we have already considered; namely that *lust* or indwelling sin, is the cause of all *actual* sin, and all habitual declensions in Believers. This is that which the Apostle intends in that place to teach and declare. I shall therefore handle these two things, and shew, First, That this doth evince a great *efficacy and power* in sin. Secondly, Declare the ways and means whereby it *brings forth* or brings about this cursed effect; all in design of our general end, in calling upon and cautioning Believers to avoid it, to oppose it.

First, It appears to be a work of great *power and efficacy*, from the provision that is made against it, which it prevails over. There is in the Covenant of grace plentiful provision made, not only for the preventing of *declensions* and decays in Believers,

lievers, but alſo for their continual carrying on towards perfection. As,

Firſt, The *Word* it ſelf, and all the Ordinances of the Goſpel, are appointed and given unto us for this end, *Eph.* 4.11, 12, 13, 14, 15. That which is the end of giving *Goſpel Officers* to the Church is the end alſo of giving all the *Ordinances* to be adminiſtred by them. For they are given *for the work of the miniſtry*, that is, for the adminiſtration of the Ordinances of the Goſpel. Now what is, or what are theſe ends? They are all for the preventing of decays and *declenſions* in the Saints, all for the carrying them on to Perfection, ſo it is ſaid, *ver.* 12. In general it is *for the perfecting of the Saints*, carrying on the work of grace in them, and the work of holineſs and obedience by them; or for *the edifying of the body of Chriſt*, their building up in an encreaſe of faith and love, even of every true member of the myſtical body. But how far are they appointed thus to carry them on, thus to build them up? Hath it bounds fixed to its work? doth it carry them ſo far, and then leave them? No, ſaith the Apoſtle, *verſe* 13. The diſpenſation of the Word of the Goſpel, and the Ordinances thereof, is deſigned for our help, aſſiſtance, and furtherance, until the whole work of faith and obedience is conſummate. It is appointed to *perfect* and *compleat* that faith, knowledge, and growth in grace and holineſs, which is allotted unto us in this world. But what and if oppoſitions and temptations do lie in the way, *Satan* and his inſtruments working with great ſubtilty and deceit? Why *verſe* 14. theſe

these *Ordinances* are designed for our safe-guarding and deliverance from all their attempts and assaults, that so being preserved in the use of them, *or speaking the truth in love, we may grow up unto him in all things who is the head, even Christ Jesus*, This is in general the use of all *Gospel Ordinances*, the chief and man end for which they were *given* and appointed of God; namely to preserve Believers from all *decays* of faith and obedience, and to carry them on still towards *perfection*. These are means which God, the *good Husbandman*, makes use of, to cause the *Vine* to thrive and bring forth fruit. And I could also manifest the same to be the especial end of them distinctly. Briefly, the *Word* is *milk* and *strong meat*, for the nourishing and strengthning of all sorts, and all degrees of Believers. It hath both *seed* and water in it, and manuring with it, to make them fruitful. The Ordinance of the *Supper* is appointed on purpose for the *strengthning* of our faith in the remembrance of the death of the Lord, and the exercise of love one towards another. The *communion of Saints* is for the edifying each other in faith, love, and obedience.

Secondly, There is that which adds weight to this consideration. God suffers us not to be *unmindful* of this assistance he hath afforded us, but is continually *calling upon us* to make use of the means oppointed for the attaining of the end proposed. He shews them unto us, as the *Angel* shewed the water-spring to *Hagar*: Commands, Exhortations, Promises, Threatnings, are multiplied to this purpose; see them summed up,

Heb.

*Heb.*2.1.He is continually ſaying to us, Why will you die? why will you *wither and decay?* Come to the *Paſtures* provided for you, and your ſouls ſhall live. If we ſee a *Lamb* run from the fold into the Wilderneſs, we wonder not if it be torn and rent of wild beaſts: If we ſee a *Sheep* leaving its *green Paſtures* and water-courſes, to abide in dry barren *Heaths*, we count it no marvel, nor enquire farther, if we ſee him lean and ready to periſh. But if we find *Lambs* wounded in the *fold*, we wonder at the boldneſs and rage of the *beaſts of prey*, that durſt ſet upon them there. If we ſee *Sheep* pining in *full paſtures*, we judge them to be diſeaſed and unſound. It is indeed no marvel that poor creatures, who forſake their *own mercies*, and run away from the paſture and fold of Chriſt in his Ordinances, are rent and torn with divers *luſts*, and do pine away with hunger and famine. But to ſee men living under, and enjoying all the means of ſpiritual *thriving*, yet to *decay*, not to be fat and flouriſhing, but rather daily to pine and wither, this argues ſome ſecret powerful diſtemper, whoſe poiſonous and noxious qualities hinder the vertue and efficacy of the means they enjoy. This is *Indwelling-ſin*. So wonderfully powerful, ſo effectually *poiſonous* it is, that it can bring *leanneſs* on the ſouls of men in the midſt of all precious means of growth and flouriſhing. It may well make us tremble to ſee men living under, and in the uſe of the means of the Goſpel, preaching, praying, adminiſtration of Sacraments, and yet grow colder every day than other in zeal for God, more ſelfiſh and worldly, even *habitually*,

to

to decline as to the degrees of holiness which they had attained unto.

Thirdly, Together with the dispensation of the *outward means* of spiritual growth or improvement, there are also supplies of grace continually afforded the *Saints* from their Head, Christ Jesus. He is the Head of all the Saints. And he is a *living Head*, and so a living Head, as that he tells us, that *because he liveth, we shall live also*, *Joh.* 14. 19. He communicates of *spiritual life* to all that are his. In him is the fountain of our life, which is therefore said to be *hid with him in God*, *Col.* 3. 3. And this life he gives unto his Saints, by *quickning* of them by his Spirit, *Rom.* 9. 11. And he continues it unto them, by the supplies of *living grace* which he communicates unto them. From these *two*, his *quickning* of us, and continually giving out supplies *of life unto us*, he is said to live in us, *Gal.* 2. 20. *I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.* The *spiritual life* which I have is not mine own, not from my self was it educed, not by my self is it maintained, but it is meerly and solely the work of Christ; so that it is not *I that live, but he lives in me*, the whole of my life being from him alone. Neither doth this *living head* communicate only a *bare life* unto believers, that they should meerly *live* & no more a poor, weak, dying life, as it were, but he gives out sufficiently to afford them a strong, vigorous, thriving, flourishing life, *Joh.* 10. 10. He comes not only that his sheep may have life, but that *they may have it more abundantly*; that is, in a plentiful manner, so as that they may flourish, be fat and fruitful.

Thus

Thus is it with the whole body of Chriſt and every member thereof, *Eph.* 4. 15, 16. *Whereby it grows up into him in all things, which is the Head, even Chriſt; from whom the whole body fitly joyned together, and compacted, by that which every joynt ſupplieth, according to the effectual working in the meaſure of every part, maketh increaſe of the body unto the edifying of it ſelf in love.* The end of all communications of grace, and ſupplies of life from this living and bleſſed Head, is the increaſe of the whole body, and every member of it, and the edifying of it ſelf in love. His treaſures of grace are unſearchable, his ſtores inexhauſtible. His *life*, the fonutain of ours, full and eternal, his *heart* bounteous and large, his *hand* open and liberal; ſo that there is no doubt but that he communicates ſupplies of grace for their increaſe in holineſs *abundantly* unto all his Saints. Whence then is it that they do not all flouriſh and *thrive* accordingly? As you may ſee it oftentimes in a natural body, ſo is it here. Though the ſeat and riſe of the blood and ſpirits in *head* and *heart* be excellently good and ſound, yet there may be a *withering member* in the body; ſomewhat intercepts the influences of life unto it. So that though the *heart* and *head* do perform their office, in giving of *ſupplies* no leſs to that, than they do to any other member, yet all the effect produced, is meerly to keep it from *utter periſhing*; it grows weak and decaies every day. The withering and decaying of any member in Chriſts *myſtical body*, is not for the want of his communication of grace for an *abundant life*, but from the powerful *interception* that

is made of the efficacy of it, by the interpoſition and oppoſition of *In-dwelling Sin*. Hence it is that where *Luſt* grows ſtrong, a great deal of Grace will but keep the Soul alive, and not give it any eminency in fruitfulneſs at all. Oftentimes Chriſt gives very *much Grace*, where not *many* of its effects do appear. It ſpends its ſtrength, and power, in withſtanding the continual aſſaults of violent corruptions and luſts, ſo that it cannot put forth its proper vertue towards farther fruitfulneſs. As a *vertuous Medicine*, that is fit both to check vitious and noxious humours, and to comfort, refreſh and ſtrengthen Nature, if the evil humour be ſtrong and greatly prevailing, ſpends its whole ſtrength and vertue in the ſubduing and correcting of it, contributing much leſs to the relief of Nature than otherwiſe it would do, if it met not with ſuch oppoſitions: So is it with *the eye-ſalve*, and the healing grace which we have *abundantly* from the *wings of the Sun of Righteouſneß*. It is forced oftentimes, to put forth its *vertue* to oppoſe and contend againſt, and in any meaſure ſubdue prevailing luſts and corruptions: That the Soul receiveth not that *ſtrengthening* unto duties and fruitfulneſs which otherwiſe it might receive by it, is from hence. How ſound, healthy, and flouriſhing, how fruitful and exemplary in holineſs, might many a ſoul be, by and with that grace which is continually communicated to it from Chriſt, which now by reaſon of the power of in-dwelling ſin is only *not dead*, but weak, withering and uſeleſs. And this, if any thing, is a notable evidence of the efficacy of *in-dwelling ſin*, that

that it is *able* to give ſuch a ſtop, and check to the mighty and effectual power of Grace, ſo that notwithſtanding the bleſſed and continual ſupplies that we receive from our Head, yet many Believers do *decline* and decay, and that *habitually*, as to what they had attained unto; their *laſt waies* not anſwering their *firſt*. This makes the Vineyard in the very *fruitful hill* to bring forth ſo many wilde Grapes. This makes ſo many trees barren in fertile fields.

Fourthly, Beſides the *continual ſupplies of Grace* that conſtantly according to the tenure of the *Covenant* are communicated unto Believers, which keeps them that they thirſt no more as to *a total indigence*, there is moreover *a readineſs* in the Lord Chriſt to yield peculiar ſuccour to the ſouls of his, according as their occaſions ſhall require. The Apoſtle tells us, that he is *a merciful High-Prieſt* and *able*, (that is *ready* prepared and willing) *to ſuccour them that are tempted*, Heb. 2. 18. And we are on that account, invited to come *with boldneſs* to the Throne of Grace, *that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need*; that is, *grace* ſufficient, ſeaſonable, ſuitable unto any ſpecial tryal or Temptation that we may be exerciſed withal. Our merciful High-Prieſt is ready to give out this eſpecial ſeaſonable Grace, over and above thoſe conſtant Communications of ſupplies of the Spirit, which we mentioned before. Beſides the *never-failing Springs* of ordinary Covenant grace, he hath alſo peculiar refreſhing ſhowers for times of drought. And this is exceedingly to the advantage of the Saints, for their preſerva-

tion and growth in grace; and there may very many more of the like nature be added. But now I say notwithstanding all these, and the residue of the like importance, such is the power and efficacy of *indwelling-Sin*, so great its *deceitfulness* and restlesness, so many its wiles and *temptations*, it often falls out that many of them for whose growth and improvement all this *provision* is made, do yet as was shewed, go back and *decline*, even as to their course of walking with God. *Sampsons* strength fully evidenced it self when he brake *seven new Withs*, and *seven new Cords*, wherewith he was bound, as *burning tow, and as thred*. The noxious humour in the body which is so stubborn, as that no use of the most soveraign remedies can prevail against it, ought to be regarded. Such is this *indwelling-sin* if not watched over: It breaks all the cords made to binde it; it blunts the instruments appointed to root it up; it resists all healing Medicines though never so soveraign, and is therefore assuredly of exceeding efficacy. Besides, Believers have *innumerable Obligations* upon them from the Love, the Command of God, to *grow in grace*, to press forward towards perfection, as they have *abundant means* provided for them so to do. Their doing so, is a matter of the greatest advantage, profit, sweetness, contentment unto them in the world: It is the burden, the trouble of their Souls, that they do not so do, that they are not more holy, more zealous useful, fruitful; they desire it above Life it self; they know it is their duty *to watch* against this Enemy, to fight against it, to pray against it, and so they do. They more

desi re

desire his *destruction*, than the enjoyment of all this world and all that it can afford. And yet notwithstanding all this such is the subtilty, and fraud, and violence, and fury, and urgency, and importunity of this Adversary, that it frequently prevails to bring them into the woful condition mentioned. Hence it is with Believers sometimes as it is with men in some places at Sea; they have a good and fair *gale of wind*, it may be all night long; they ply their *tackling*, attend diligently their business, and it may be take great contentment to consider how they proceed in their Voyage: In the morning, or after a season coming to measure what way they have made, and what progress they have had, they find that they are much *backward* of what they were, instead of getting one step *forward*; falling into a swift tide, or current against them, it hath *frustrated* all their Labours, and rendered the wind in their Sails almost useless; somewhat thereby they have born up against the stream, but have made no progress. So is it with Believers: They have a good gale of *supplies* of the Spirit from above, they attend *duties* diligently, pray constantly, hear attentively, and omit nothing that may carry them in their *Voyage* towards Eternity. But after a while, coming seriously to consider by the examination of their hearts and waies, what *progress* they have made, they find that all their assistance, and duties, have not been able to bear them up against some *strong tide* or current of *Indwelling-Sin*. It hath kept them indeed that they have not been driven and split on *rocks* and *shelves*; it hath preserved

hem from groſs, ſcandalous ſins, but yet they haye loſt in their *ſpiritual frame*, or gone backwards, and are intangled under many woful decayes; which is a *notable* evidence of the *Life of Sin*, about which we are treating. Now becauſe the end of our diſcovering *this power of Sin*, is, that we may be careful to obviate and prevent it in its *operation*, and becauſe of all the effects that it produceth there is none more dangerous or pernicious than that we have laſt inſiſted on, namely, that it prevails upon many *Profeſſors* unto an *habitual declenſion* from their former wayes and Attainments, notwithſtanding all the ſweetneſs and excellency which their Souls have found in them, I ſhall, as was ſaid, in the next place conſider by what *Waies and Means*, and through what aſſiſtance it uſually prevails in this kind, that we may the better be inſtructed to watch againſt it.

CHAP. XV.

Decayes in Degrees of Grace cauſed by In-dwelling Sin. The Waies of its prevalency to this purpoſe.

THE Waies and Means whereby *In-dwelling Sin* prevaileth on Believers unto habitual *declenſions* and decaies, as to *degrees of Grace* and Holineſs, is that now which comes under conſideration, and are many.

Firſt,

Firſt, Upon the *firſt Converſion* and calling of *Sinners* unto God and Chriſt, they have uſually many *freſh Springs* breaking forth in their Souls, and Refreſhing ſhowers coming upon them, which bear them up to an *high rate* of Faith, Love, Holineſs, Fruitfulneſs and Obedience. As upon a *Land-flood* when many leſſer ſtreams run into a River, it ſwells over its bounds, and rouls on with a more than ordinary fulneſs. Now if theſe *Springs* be not kept open, if they prevail not for the continuance of theſe ſhowers, they muſt needs decay and go backwards. We ſhall name *one or two* of them.

Firſt, They have *a freſh, vigorous ſence of Pardoning Mercy*. According as this is in the Soul, ſo will its Love and delight in God, ſo will its Obedience be. As, I ſay, is the ſence of Goſpel-pardon, ſo will be the *life* of Goſpel-love. *Luke* 7. 47. *I ſay unto thee*, ſaith our Saviour of the poor Woman, *her ſins, which were many, are forgiven, for ſhe loved much, but to whom little is forgiven, the ſame loveth little.* Her *great love* was an evidence of *great forgiveneſs*; and her great ſence of it. For our Saviour is not rendring a reaſon of her *forgiveneſs*, as though it were for her Love, but of her *Love*, that it was becauſe of her forgiveneſs. Having in the foregoing *Parable* from *Verſe* 38. and onwards, convinced the *Phariſees* with whom he had to do, that he to whom *moſt* was *forgiven* would love moſt, as *Verſe* 43. He thence gives an account of the *great love* of the Woman ſpringing from the ſence ſhe had of the *great forgiveneſs* which ſhe had ſo freely received. Thus ſinners

at their first Conversion are very sensible of great forgiveness: *Of whom I am chief*, lies next their heart. This greatly subdues their hearts and spirits unto all in God, and quickens them unto all Obedience; even that such poor cursed sinners as they were, should so *freely* be delivered and pardoned. The love of God and of Christ in their *forgiveness*, highly conquers and constrains them to make it their business to *live unto God*.

Secondly, The *fresh taste they have had of spiritual things*, keeps up such a savour and relish of them in their Souls, as that wordly Contentments whereby men are drawn off from close walking with God, are rendred sapless and undesireable unto them. Having tasted of the *Wine* of the Gospel they desire no other, for they say, *this is best*. So was it with the Apostles upon that *option* offered them as to a departure from Christ, upon the Apostasie of many false Professors; *Will ye go away also?* Joh. 6. 67. They answer by *Peter*, *Lord, to whom shall we go, thou hast the words of eternal life?* Vers. 68. They had such a *fresh savour* and relish of the Doctrine of the Gospel, and the Grace of Christ upon their Souls, that they can entertain no thoughts of declining from it. As a man that hath been long kept in a *dungeon*, if brought forth on a sudden into the Light of the Sun, finds so much pleasure and contentment in it, in the beauties of the old Creation, that he thinks he can never be weary of it, nor shall ever be contented on any account to be under darkness again. So is it with Souls when first translated into the *marvellous Light* of Christ, to behold the

the beauties of the *New Creation*. They ſee a new *Glory* in him, that hath quite ſullied the deſireableneſs of all earthly diverſions. And they ſee a new guilt and filth in ſin, that gives them an utter abhorrency of its old delights and pleaſures; and ſo of other things.

Now whileſt theſe and the *like Springs* are kept open in the Souls of converted ſinners, they conſtrain them to a vigorous active Holineſs. They can never *do enough for God*; ſo that oftentimes their Zeal, as *Saints*, ſuffers them not to eſcape without ſome blots on their Prudence *as men*, as might be inſtanced in many of the *Martyrs* of old.

This then is the *firſt*, at leaſt *one way* whereby indwelling-ſin prepares men for *decayes* and declenſions in Grace and Obedience: It endeavours to *ſtop* or taint *theſe ſprings*. And there are ſeveral waies whereby it bringeth this to paſs.

Firſt, It works by *ſloth* and *negligence*. It prevails in the Soul to a neglect of *ſtirring up* continual thoughts of, or about the things that ſo powerfully *influence* it unto ſtrict and fruitful obedience. If care be not taken, if diligence and watchfulneſs be not uſed, and all means obſerved that are appointed of God, to keep a quick and living ſenſe of them upon the Soul, they will dry up and decay, and conſequently that Obedience that ſhould ſpring from them will do ſo alſo. *Iſaac digged Wells*, but the *Philiſtins* ſtopt them, and his Flocks had no benefit by them. Let the heart never ſo little diſuſe it ſelf to gracious ſoul-affecting thoughts of the Love of God, the Croſs of Chriſt,

Chriſt, the greatneſs and excellency of Goſpel mercy, the beauties of holineſs, they will quickly be as as much *eſtranged* to a man, as he can be to them. He that ſhuts his eyes for a ſeaſon in the Sun, when he opens them again can ſee nothing at all. And ſo much as a man loſeth of *faith* towards theſe things, ſo much will they loſe of *power* towards him. They can do little or nothing upon him, becauſe of his unbelief, which formerly were ſo exceedingly effectual towards him. So was it with the *Spouſe* in the *Canticles*, chap. 5. 2. Chriſt calls unto her, *ver.* 1. with a marvellous *loving* and gracious invitation unto communion with himſelf. She who had formerly been *raviſhed* at the firſt hearing of that *joyful ſound*, being now under the power of *ſloth* and carnal eaſe, returns a ſorry *excuſing* anſwer to his Call, which ended in her own ſignal loſs and ſorrow. *Indwelling-ſin*, I ſay, prevailing by *ſpiritual ſloth* upon the ſouls of men unto an inadvertency of the motions of Gods Spirit in their former apprehenſions of divine Love, and a negligence of ſtirring up continual thoughts of *faith* about it, a *decay* grows inſenſibly upon the whole ſoul. Thus God oft complains that his people had *forgotten him*, that is, grew unmindful of his Love and Grace, which was the beginning of their *Apoſtaſie*.

Secondly, By *unframing the ſoul*, ſo that it ſhall have formal, weary, *powerleſs* thoughts of thoſe things, which ſhould prevail with it unto *diligence* in thankful obedience. The Apoſtle cautions us, that in dealing with God, we ſhould *uſe reverence and godly fear*, becauſe of his purity, holineſs, and

and Majeſty, *Heb.* 12. 28, 29. And this is that which the Lord himſelf ſpake in the deſtruction of *Nadab* and *Abihu*, *I will be ſanctified in them that come to me*, Lev. 10. 3. He will be dealt withal in an awful, *holy*, reverent manner. So are we to deal with all the things of God, wherein, or whereby we have communion with him. The ſoul is to have a great Reverence of God in them. When men begin to take them into *ſlight* and *common thoughts*, not uſing and improving them unto the utmoſt for the ends whereunto they are appointed, they loſe all their beauty, and glory, and power towards them. When we have any thing to do wherein faith and love towards God is to be exerciſed, we muſt do it with all our hearts, with all our minds, ſtrength and ſouls, not ſlightly and *perfunctorily*, which God abhors; he doth not only require that we bear his Love and Grace in remembrance, but that, as much as in us lyeth, we do it according to the worth and excellency of them. It was the ſin of *Hezekiah*, that he *rendred not again according to the benefits done to him*, 2 Chron. 32. 25. So whilſt we conſider Goſpel truths, the uttermoſt endeavour of the ſoul ought to be, that we may be changed into the ſame image or likeneſs, 2 *Cor.* 3. 18. that is, that they may have their full power and effect upon us. Otherwiſe *James* tells us what our *beholding the glory of the Lord in a glaſs*, there mentioned by the Apoſtle, that is, reading or hearing the mind of God in Chriſt revealed in the Goſpel, comes unto, *chap.* 1. *verſ.* 23, 24. *It is but like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glaſs, for he beholdeth himſelf*

himself and goeth away, and streight way forgetteth what manner of man he was. It makes no impression upon him, begets no *Idea* nor image of his likeness in his imagination, because he doth it only *slightly*, and with a transient look. So is it with men that will indeed think of *Gospel truths*, but in a slight manner, without endeavouring with all their hearts, minds, and strength, to have them ingrafted upon their souls, and all the effects of them produced in them. Now this is the way of *sinners*, in their first *engagements* unto God. They never think of *pardoning mercy*, but they labour to affect their whole souls with it, and do stir up themselves unto suitable affections and returns of constant obedience. They think not of the *Excellency of Christ*, and spiritual things, now newly discovered unto them in a saving light, but they press with all their might after a farther, a fuller enjoyment of them. This keeps them *humble* and holy, this makes them thankful and fruitful. But now if the utmost *diligence* and carefulness be not used to improve and grow in this Wisdom, to keep up this frame, *indwelling-sin* working by the *vanity of the minds of men*, will insensibly bring them to content themselves with *slight* and *rare* thoughts of these things, without a diligent sedulous endeavour to give them their due improvement upon the soul. As men *decay* herein, so they will assuredly *decay* and decline in the *power of holiness*, and close walking with God. The *springs* being stopt or tainted, the streams will not run so *swiftly*, at least not so *sweetly* as formerly. Some by this means under an uninterrupted

rupted profeſſion, inſenſibly wither almoſt into nothing. They talk of Religion and ſpiritual things as much as ever they did in their lives, and perform *duties* with as much conſtancy as ever they did, but yet have poor lean ſtarvling ſouls, as to any real and effectual communion with God. By the power and ſubtilty of *indwelling-ſin* they have grown *formal*, and learned to deal about ſpiritual things in an *overly* manner, whereby they have loſt all their life, vigour, ſavour, and efficacy towards them. Be alwaies *ſerious* in ſpiritual things, if ever you intend to be bettered by them.

Thirdly, *Indwelling-ſin* oftentimes prevailes to the ſtopping of theſe ſprings of Goſpel obedience, by falſe and fooliſh opinions, corrupting the *ſimplicity* of the Goſpel. Falſe opinions are the *works of the fleſh*. From the *vanity* and darkneſs of the minds of men, with a mixture more or leſs of corrupt affections, do they moſtly proceed. The Apoſtle was *jealous* over his *Corinthians* in this matter, he was afraid leſt their minds ſhould *by any means be corrupted from the ſimplicity that is in Chriſt*, 2 Cor. 11. 2, 3. which he knew would be attended by a *decay* and declenſion in faith, love, and obedience. And thus matters in this caſe often fall out. We have ſeen ſome, who after they have received a ſweet *taſte* of the love of God in Chriſt, of the excellency of *pardoning mercy*, and have walked humbly with God for many years, in the faith and apprehenſion of the truth, have by the corruption of their minds from the ſimplicity that is in Chriſt by falſe and fooliſh opinions, deſpiſed all their own experiences, and rejected

rejected all the efficacy of truth, as to the furtherance of their obedience. Hence *John* cautions the *Elect Lady* and her children to take heed they were not seduced, *lest they should lose the things that they had wrought*, 2 Epist.v.8. lest they should themselves cast away all their former obedience as lost, and a thing of no value. We have innumerable instances hereof in the daies wherein we live. How many are there, who not many years since put an unspeakable value *on the pardon of sin in the blood of Christ*, who delighted in Gospel discoveries of spiritual things, and walked in obedience unto God on the account of them, who being *beguiled* and turned aside from the truth as it is in Jesus, do despise these *springs* of their own former obedience? And as this is done *grosly* and openly in some, so there are more *secret* and more *plausible* insinuations of corrupt opinions, tainting the springs and fountains of Gospel obedience, and through the vanity of mens minds, which is a principal part of indwelling-sin, getting ground upon them. Such are all those that tend to the extenuation of *special Grace* in its freedom, and efficacy, and the advancement of the wills or the endeavours of men in their spiritual power and ability: They are all *works of the flesh*, and howsoever some may pretend an usefulness in them to the *promotion of holiness*, they will be found to *taint the springs* of true Evangelical obedience, insensibly to turn the heart from God, and to bring the whole soul into a spiritual *decay*.

And this is one way whereby *Indwelling-sin* produceth this pernicious effect, of drawing men off

off from the power, purity, and fruitfulneſs attending their firſt converſion, and engagements unto God, bringing them into *habitual declenſion*, at leaſt as unto *degrees* of their holineſs and grace. There is not any thing we ought to be more watchful againſt, if we intend effectually to deal with this powerful and ſubtile enemy. It is no ſmall part of the *wiſdom of faith*, to obſerve whether Goſpel truths continue to have the ſame *ſavour* unto, and *efficacy* upon the ſoul, as formerly they have had; and whether an indeavour be maintained to improve them continually as at the firſt. A commandment that is alwaies practiſed, is alwaies new, as *John* ſpeaks of that of Love. And he that really improves Goſpel truths, though he hears them a thouſand times, they will be alwaies *new* and freſh unto him, becauſe they put him on *newneſs* of practice. When to another that grows *common* under them, they are burthenſome and *common* unto him; and he even loaths the *Manna* that he is ſo accuſtomed unto.

Secondly, *Indwelling-ſin* doth this, *by taking men off from their watch againſt the returns of Satan.* When our Lord Chriſt comes firſt to take poſſeſſion of any ſoul for himſelf, he binds that *ſtrong man and ſpoils his goods*; he deprives them of all his power, dominion and intereſt. Satan being thus diſpoſſeſt and fruſtrated in his hopes and expectations, leaves the ſoul, as finding it newly mortified to his baits. So he left our Saviour upon his firſt fruitleſs attempts. But it is ſaid, *He left him only for a ſeaſon*, Luk. 4.13. He intended to return again, as he ſhould ſee his advantage. So is it with

with *Believers* alſo. Being caſt out from his intereſt in them, he leaves them for a *ſeaſon*, at leaſt comparatively he doth ſo. Freed from his aſſaults and perplexing temptations, they proceed *vigorouſly* in the courſe of their obedience, and ſo flouriſh in the waies of God. But this holds not; Satan returns again, and if the ſoul ſtands not continually upon his *guard* againſt him, he will quickly get ſuch advantages, as ſhall put a notable interruption upon his fruitfulneſs and obedience. Hence ſome, after they have ſpent *ſome time*, it may be *ſome years* in cheerful exemplary walking with God, have upon Satans *return*, conſumed all their latter daies in wreſtling with perplexing temptations, wherewith he hath intangled them. Others have plainly fallen under the power of his aſſaults. It is like a man, who having for a while lived *uſefully* amongſt his neighbours, done good, and communicated according to his ability, diſtributing to the poor, and helping all round about him, at length falling into the hands of vexatious, wrangling oppreſſive men, he is forced to ſpend his whole time and revenue in defending himſelf againſt them at Law, and ſo becomes uſeleſs in the place where he lives. So is it with many a Believer; after he hath walked in a fruitful courſe of obedience to the glory of God, and edification of the Church of Chriſt, being afreſh ſet upon by the *return* of Satan in one way or other, he hath enough to do all the remainder of his life to keep himſelf *alive*; in the mean time a to many graces, wofully decaying and going backward. Now this alſo, though Satan hath an hand in it, is from

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Indwelling-ſin: I mean, the ſucceſs is ſo which Satan doth obtain in his undertaking. This encourageth him, maketh way for his return, and gives entrance to his temptations. You know how it is with them, out of whom he is caſt only by *Goſpel conviction*; after he hath wandred and waited awhile, he ſaith, *He will return to his houſe from whence he was ejected*: And what is the iſſue? Carnal luſts have prevailed over the mans convictions, and made his ſoul fit to entertain *returning devils*. It is ſo as to the meaſure of prevalency, that Satan obtains againſt Believers, upon advantages adminiſtred unto him, by ſins diſpoſing the ſoul unto an obnoxiouſneſs to his temptations.

Now the way and means whereby *Indwelling-ſin* doth give advantage to Satan for his *return*, are all thoſe which diſpoſe them towards a *declenſion* which ſhall afterwards be mentioned. Satan is a diligent, watchful, and crafty adverſary, he will neglect no opportunity, no advantage that is offered unto him. Wherein then ſoever our ſpiritual ſtrength is impaired by *ſin*, or which way ſoever our luſts preſs, Satan falls in with that weakneſs, and preſſeth towards that ruine. So that all the actings of the Law of ſin are ſubſervient to this end of Satan. I ſhall therefore only at preſent mention one or two, that ſeem principally to invite Satan to attempt a *return*.

Firſt, It intangleth the ſoul in the things of the world, all which are ſo many Purveyors for Satan. When *Pharaoh* had let the people go, he heard after a while that they were *intangled in the wilderneſs* and ſuppoſeth that he ſhall therefore now

overtake them and deſtroy them. This ſtirs him up to *purſue* after them. Satan finding thoſe whom he hath been caſt out from, intangled in the things of the world, by which he is ſure to find an eaſie *acceſs* unto them, is encouraged to attempt upon them afreſh; as the *Spider* to come down upon the ſtrongeſt flie that is *entangled* in his web. For he comes by his temptations only to impel them unto that whereunto by their own luſts they are enclined, by adding *poiſon* to their luſts, and *painting* to the *objects* of them. And oftentimes by this advantage he gets ſo in upon the ſouls of men, that they are never well free of him more whilſt they live. And as mens *diverſions* increaſe from the world, ſo do their *entanglements* from Satan. When they have more to do in the world than they can well manage, they ſhall have more to do from Satan than they can well withſtand. When men are made ſpiritually *faint*, by dealing in and with the world, Satan ſets on them as *Amalek* did on the faint and weak of the people that came out of *Egypt*.

Secondly, It produceth this effect by *making the ſoul negligent*, and taking it off from its watch. We have before ſhewed at large that it is one main part of the *effectual deceitfulneſs of Indwelling ſin*, to make the ſoul *inadvertent*, to turn it off from the diligent watchful attendance unto its duty, which is required. Now there is not any thing in reference whereunto diligence and watchfulneſs is more ſtrictly enjoyned, than the *returning aſſaults* of Satan, 1 *Pet.* 5. 8. *Be ſober, be vigilant*; and why ſo? *becauſe of your adverſary the Devil*. Unleſs you

you are exceeding *watchful*, at one time or other he will ſurprize you. And all the injunctions of our bleſſed *Saviour*, to *watch*, are ſtill with reference unto him, and his temptations. Now when the ſoul is made *careleſs* and inadvertent, forgetting what an enemy it hath to deal withal, or is lifted up with the *ſucceſſes* it hath newly obtained againſt him, then is Satans time to attempt a re-entrance of his old *habitation*; which if he cannot obtain, yet he makes their lives uncomfortable to themſelves, and unfruitful to others, in weakening their *root*, and withering their *fruit* through his poiſoning temptations. He comes down upon our duties of *obedience*, as the fowls upon *Abrahams* ſacrifice, that if we watch not, as he did, to drive them away, [for by reſiſtance he is overcome and put to flight] he will *devour* them.

Thirdly, *Indwelling-ſin* takes advantage to put forth its efficacy and deceit, to with-draw men from their *primitive zeal* and holineſs, from their *firſt faith*, *love*, and works by the *evil examples of Profeſſors* amongſt whom they live. When men firſt engage into the ways of God, they have a *reverent eſteem* of thoſe whom they believe to have been made partakers of that mercy before themſelves; theſe they love and honour, as it is their duty. But after a while they find many of them walking in many things *unevenly*, *crookedly*, & not unlike the men of the world. Here *ſin* is not wanting to its advantage. Inſenſibly it prevails with men to a compliance with them. This way, this courſe of walking, doth *well enough* with others, why may it not do ſo with us alſo? Such is the

inward thought of many, that works effectually in them. And ſo through the craft of *ſin*, the generation of Profeſſors corrupt one another. As a *ſtream* ariſing from a clear ſpring or fountain, whilſt it runs in its own peculiar channel, and keeps its water unmixed, preſerves its purity and cleanneſs, but when it falls in its courſe with other ſtreams that are *turbid* and *foul*, though running the ſame way with it, it becomes *muddy* and *diſcoloured* alſo. So is it in this caſe. Believers come forth from the ſpring of the *New birth* with ſome purity and cleanneſs, this for a while they keep in the courſe of their private walking with God; but now when they come ſometimes to fall into *ſociety* with *others*, whoſe profeſſion flows & runs the ſame way with theirs, even towards heaven, but yet are *mudded* and *ſullied* with ſin and the world, they are often corrupted with them, and by them, and ſo decline from their firſt purity, faith, and holineſs. Now leſt this may have been the caſe of any who ſhall read this diſcourſe, I ſhall add ſome few cautions that are *neceſſary* to preſerve men from this infection.

Firſt, In the *body of Profeſſors* there is a great number of *hypocrites*. Though we cannot ſay of *this* or *that* man, that he is ſo, yet that ſome there are, is moſt certain. Our Saviour hath told us that it will be ſo to the end of the world. All that have *Oyl* in their *Lamps*, have it not in their *veſſels*. Let men take heed how they give themſelves up unto a *conformity* to the Profeſſors they meet withal, leſt inſtead of *Saints* and the beſt of men, they ſometimes propoſe for their example *hypocrites*,

pocrites, which are the *worſt*, and when they think they are *like* unto them who bare the *image of God*, they conform themſelves to thoſe, who bare the *Image of Satan*.

Secondly, You know not what may be the *preſent temptations* of thoſe whoſe *ways* you obſerve. It may be they are under ſome *peculiar deſertion* from God, and ſo are *withering* for a ſeaſon, untill he ſend them ſome *refreſhing powers* from above. It may be they are intangled with ſome *ſpecial corruptions*, which is their burthen, tat you know not of; and for any voluntarily to fall into ſuch a frame, as others are caſt into by the power of their temptations, or to think that will ſuffice in them, which they ſee to ſuffice in others whoſe diſtempers they know not, is *folly* and preſumption. He that knows *ſuch* or *ſuch* a perſon to be a living Man, and of an healthy conſtitution, if he ſee him go *crawling* up and down about his affairs, feeble and weak, ſometimes falling, ſometimes ſtanding, and making ſmall progreſs in any thing, will he think it ſufficient for himſelf to do ſo alſo? will he not inquire whether the perſon he ſees, have not lately fallen into ſome *diſtemper* or *ſickneſs*, that hath weakened him, and brought him into that condition? Aſſuredly he will ſo do. Take heed, Chriſtians, many of the Profeſſors with whom ye do converſe are ſick, and wounded; the wounds of ſome of them do *ſtink, and are corrupt becauſe of their folly*. If you have any *ſpiritual health*, do not think their weak and uneven walking will be accepted at your hands; much leſs [illegible]ink it will

be well for you to become *ſick* and to be wounded alſo.

Thirdly, Remember that of many of the *beſt Chriſtians*, the *worſt* only is known and ſeen. Many who keep up precious Communion with God, do yet oftentimes by their *natural temper* of freedom or paſſion, not carry ſo glorious appearances as others, who perhaps come ſhort of them in Grace and the power of Godlineſs. In reſpect of their outward Converſation it may ſeem they are ſcarcely *ſaved*, when in reſpect of their *Faith and Love* they may be eminent. They may, as the *Kings Daughter*, be all glorious within, though their *Cloaths be not alwayes of wrought Gold*. Take heed then that you be not infected with their *worſt*, when ye are not able it may be to imitate them in their *beſt*; but to return.

Fourthly, Sin doth this work by *cheriſhing ſome ſecret particular luſt in the heart*. This the ſoul contends againſt faintly. It *contends againſt* it upon the account of ſincerity, it cannot but do ſo; but it doth not make through-work vigorouſly to mortifie it by the ſtrength and power of Grace. Now where it is thus with the Soul, an *habitual declenſion* as to holineſs will aſſuredly enſue. *David* ſhews us how in his *firſt days* he kept his heart cloſe unto God, *Pſal* 18.23. *I was upright before him, and I kept my ſelf from mine iniquity*. His great care was leſt any *one luſt* ſhould prevail in him, or upon him, that might be called *his iniquity* in a *peculiar manner*. The ſame courſe ſteer'd *Paul* alſo 1 *Cor.* 9.27. he was in *danger to be lifted up* by his ſpiritual revelations and Enjoyments. This

makes

makes him keep *his body in ſubjection*, that no carnal reaſonings or vain imagination might take place in him. But where *indwelling Sin* hath provoked, irritated, and given ſtrength unto a *ſpecial luſt*, it proves aſſuredly a *Principal Means* of a general declenſion. For as an infirmity and weakneſs in any one vital part, will make the whole body conſumptive, ſo will the *weakneſs in any one Grace*, which a perplexing luſt brings with it, make the Soul. It every way weakens ſpiritual ſtrength. It weakens *Confidence* in God in Faith and Prayer. The *knees* will be feeble, and the *hands* will hang down in dealing with God, where a galling and unmortified luſt lies in the heart. It will take *ſuch hold upon the ſoul, that it ſhall not be able to look up*, Pſal. 40. 12. It darkens the mind by *innumerable fooliſh imaginations*, which it ſtirs up to make proviſion for its ſelf. It *galls* the Conſcience with thoſe ſpots and ſtains, which in and by its actings it brings upon the ſoul. It contends in the *Will* for Rule and Dominion: An *active ſtirring corruption* would have the commanding power in the ſoul, and it is ever and anon ready to take the Throne. It *diſturbs* the thoughts, and ſometimes will even frighten the ſoul from dealing with it by meditation, leſt corrupt affections being entangled by it, Grace loſes ground inſtead of prevailing. It *breaks* out oftentimes into ſcandalous ſins, as it did in *David* and *Hezekiah*, and loads the ſinner with ſorrow and diſcouragemen. By theſe and the like means it becomes to the ſoul like a *moth in a garment*, to eat up and devour the ſtrongeſt threeds of it, ſo

that though the whole hang *looſe* together, it is eaſily torn in pieces. Though the ſoul with whom it is thus, do for a ſeaſon keep up a *fair profeſſion*, yet his ſtrength is ſecretly devoured; and every temptation tears and rents his *Conſcience* at pleaſure. It becomes with ſuch Men as it is with ſome who have for a many years been of a ſound ſtrong *athletick* conſtitution. Some ſecret *hectical diſtemper* ſeizeth on them: For a ſeaſon they take no notice of it; or if they do, they think they ſhall do well enough with it, and eaſily ſhake it off when they have a little leaſure to attend unto it: But for the preſent they think as *Sampſon* with his locks cut, they will do as at other times. Sometimes it may be they complain that they are not *well*, they know not what aileth them, and it may be riſe violently in an oppoſition to their diſtemper; but after a while *ſtruggling* in vain, the vigour of their ſpirits and ſtrength failing them, they are forced to yield to the power of a *conſumption*. And now all they can do is little enough to keep them alive. It is ſo with Men brought into *ſpiritual decays* by any ſecret perplexing corruption. It may be they have had a vigorous principle of obedience and holineſs: *Indwelling Sin* watching its opporotunities, by ſome temptation or other, hath kindled and inflamed ſome particular luſt in them. For a while it may be they take little notice of it. Somtimes they *complain*, but think they will do as in former times, untill being inſenſibly weakned in their ſpiritual ſtrength, they have work enough to do in keeping alive what remains and is ready to dye, *Hoſ.* 5. 13.

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I ſhall not add any thing here as to the prevention and obviating this advantage of Indwelling-ſin, having elſewhere treated of it peculiarly and apart.

Fifthly, It works by *negligence of private communion with God in Prayer and Meditation*. I have ſhewed before how *Indwelling Sin* puts forth its *deceitfulneſs* in diverting the ſoul from watchfulneſs in and unto theſe duties. Here if it prevails, it will not fail to induce an *habitual declenſion* in the whole courſe of Obedience. All neglect of private duties is principled by a *wearineſs* of God as he complaineth, *Iſa.*43.22. *Thou haſt not called upon Me, thou haſt been weary of Me.* Neglect of invocation proceeds from wearineſs. And where there is *wearineß*, there will be withdrawing from that whereof we are weary. Now God alone being the fountain and ſpring of ſpiritual life, if there be a *wearineß* of him, and withdrawing from him, it is impoſſible but that there will *a decay* in the Life enſue. Indeed what men are in *theſe duties*, I mean as to Faith and Love in them, that they are and no more. Here lies the root of their obedience, and if this fail all fruit will quickly fail. You may ſometimes ſee a *Tree* flouriſhing with leaves and fruit goodly and pleaſant. After a while the *leaves* begin to decay, the *fruit* to wither, the whole to droop. Search, and you ſhall find the *root*, whereby it ſhould draw in moiſture and fatneſs from the Earth to ſupply the body and branches with ſap and juice for growth and fruit, hath received a wound, is ſome way periſhed, and doth not perform its duty, ſo that though

though the branches are flouriſhing a while with what they had received their ſuſtenance being intercepted they muſt decay. So it is here. Theſe duties of private Communion with God, are the means of receiving ſupplies of *ſpiritual ſtrength* from him; of ſap & fatneſs from Chriſt the Vine and Olive. Whileſt they do ſo, the converſation and courſe of obedience *flouriſheth* and is fruitful, all outward duties are chearfully and regularly performed. But if there be a *wound*, a defect, a failing in that which ſhould firſt take in the *ſpiritual radical moiſture*, that ſhould be communicated unto the whole, the reſt may for a ſeaſon maintain their ſtation and appearance, but after a while profeſſion will wither, fruits will decay, and the whole be ready to die. Hence our Saviour lets us know, *Matth.* 6. 6. what a man is *in ſecret*, in theſe private duties, that he is in the eyes of God, and no more. And one reaſon amongſt others is, becauſe they have a more vigorous acting of *unmixed grace* than any other duties whatever. In all or moſt particular duties, beſides the influence that they may have from carnal reſpects, which are many, and the waves of their inſinuation ſubtile, and imperceptible, there is an *allay* of *gifts*, which ſometime even devours the pure Gold of Grace which ſhould be the chief and Principal in them. In theſe, there is immediate entercourſe between God, and that which is of himſelf in the ſoul. If once ſin by its deceits and treacheries, prevail to take off the Soul from *diligent attendance* unto Communion with God, and conſtancy in theſe duties, it will

not

not fail to effect a *declining* in the whole of a mans obedience. It hath made its entrance, and will assuredly make good its progress.

Sixthly, Growing in *Notions of Truth without answerable practice*, is another thing that *Indwelling-sin* makes use to bring the souls of Believers under a *decay*. The Apostle tells us, that *knowledge puffeth up*, 1 *Cor.* 8. 1. If it be alone, not improved in practice, it *swells men* beyond a due proportion. Like a man that hath a *Dropsie*, we are not to expect that he hath strength to his bigness. Like trees that are continually *running up an head*, which keeps them from bearing fruit. When once men have attained to this, that they can entertain and receive *Evangelical truths* in a new and more Glorious light, or more clear discovery than formerly, or new manifestations of Truth which they knew not before, and please themselves in so doing, without *diligent endeavors* to have the power of those truths and notions upon their hearts and their souls made conformable unto them, they generally learn so to dispose of all truths formerly known, which were sometimes inlaid in their hearts with more efficacy and power. This hath proved, if not the *ruine*, yet the great *impairing* of many in these *days of light* wherein we live. By this means from humble close *walking*, many have withered into an empty, barren, *talking* profession. All things almost have in a short season become alike unto them: Have they been true or false, so they might be debating of them, and disputing about them, all is well. This is *food for sin*, it hatcheth, increaseth it,

it, and is increaſed by it. A notable way it is for the *vanity* that is in the mind, to exert it ſelf without a rebuke from conſcience. Whilſt men are talking, and writing, and ſtudying about Religion, and hearing *Preaching*, it may be, with great *delight*, as thoſe in *Ezekiel chap.* 33. 32. Conſcience, unleſs throughly awake and circumſpect, and furniſhed with ſpiritual wiſdom and care, will be very well pacified, and enter no rebukes or pleas againſt the way that the ſoul is in. But yet all this may be nothing but the acting of that *natural vanity* which lies in the mind, and is a principal part of the ſin we treat of. And generally this is ſo, when men content themſelves, as was ſaid, with the notions of truth, without labouring after an experience of the power of them in their hearts, and the bringing forth the fruit of them in their lives, on which a *decay* muſt needs enſue.

Seventhly, *Growth in carnal wiſdom* is another help to ſin in producing this ſad effect. *Thy wiſdom and thy knowledge*, ſaith the Prophet, *hath perverted thee*, *Iſa.* 47. 10. So much as *carnal wiſdom* increaſeth, ſo much faith decays. The proper work of it is to teach a man *to truſt to and in himſelf*, of faith to truſt wholly in another. So it labours to deſtroy the whole work of faith, by cauſing the ſoul to return into a deceiving *fulneſs* of his own. We have woful examples of the prevalency of this principle of declenſion in the days wherein we live. How many a poor, humble, broken hearted creature, who followed after God in ſimplicity and integrity of ſpirit, have we ſeen, through the obſervation of the ways and walkings of

of others, and closing with the temptations to craft and subtilty, which opportunities in the world have administred unto them, come to be dipt in a *worldly carnal frame*, and utterly to wither in their profession. Many are so *sullied* hereby, that they are not to be known to be the men they were.

Eightly, Some great sin lying long in the heart and conscience unrepented of, or not repented of as it ought, and as the matter requires, furthers *indwelling-sin* in this work. The great turn of the life of *David*, whence his *first ways* carried the reputation, was in the harbouring his great sin in his conscience without suitable repentance. It was otherwise we know with *Peter*, and he had another issue. A great sin will certainly give a great *turn* to the life of a Professor. If it be well cured in the blood of Christ, with that humiliation which the Gospel requires, it often proves a means of more watchfulness, fruitfulness, humility, and contentation, than ever the soul before obtained. If it be neglected, it certainly *hardens the heart*, weakens spiritual strength, enfeebles the soul, discouraging it unto all communion with God, and is a notable principle of a general decay. So *David* complains, *Ps.* 38. 5. *My wounds stink and are corrupt because of my foolishness.* His present distemper was not so much from his *sin*, as his *folly*, not so much from the wounds he had received, as from his neglect to make a timely application for their cure. It is like a *broken bone*, which being well set, leaves the place stronger than before; if otherwise, makes the man a *Cripple* all

all his days. Theſe things we do but briefly name, and ſundry other advantages of the like nature that *ſin* makes uſe of to produce this effect, might alſo be inſtanced in; but theſe may ſuffice unto our preſent purpoſe. What ever it uſeth, it ſelf is ſtill the principle; and this is no ſmall demonſtration of its efficacy and power.

CHAP. XVI.

The ſtrength of Indwelling ſin, manifeſted from its power and effects in perſons unregenerate.

IT is of the power and efficacy of *Indwelling-ſin*, as it remains in ſeveral degrees in Believers that we are treating. Now I have elſe-where ſhewed, that the nature and all the natural properties of it do ſtill remain in them. Though therefore we cannot prove directly what is the *ſtrength* of ſin in them, from what its *power* is in thoſe, in whom it is only checked and not at all weakned; yet may we from an obſervation thereof caution Believers of the real power of that *mortal enemy* with whom they have to do.

If the Plague do violently rage in *one* City, deſtroying multitudes, and there be in *another* an infection of the ſame kind, which yet ariſes not unto that height and fury there, by reaſon of the *correction* that it meets withal from a *better air*, and remedies uſed; yet a man may demonſtrate

ſtrate unto the Inhabitants the force and danger of that *Infection* got in among them, by the *effects* that it hath and doth produce among others, who have not the benefit of the *preventives* and preſervatives which they enjoy; which will both teach them to value the means of their preſervation, and be the more watchful againſt the power of the infection that is among them. It is ſo in this caſe. Believers may be taught what is the power and efficacy of that *plague of ſin*, which is in and among them, by the *effects* the ſame plague produceth in and among others, who have not thoſe *corrections* of its poyſon, and thoſe *preſervatives* from death which the Lord Jeſus hath furniſhed them withal.

Having then fixed on the Demonſtration of the power of ſin, from the *effects* it doth produce, and having given a double inſtance hereof in *Believers* themſelves, I ſhall now farther evidence the ſame truth, or purſue the ſame evidence of it, by ſhewing ſomewhat of the power that it acteth in them who are *unregenerate*, and ſo have not the remedies againſt it which Believers are furniſhed withal.

I ſhall not handle the *whole power of ſin* in unregenerate perſons, which is a very large field, and not the buſineſs I have in hand; but only by ſome *few inſtances* of its effects in them, intimate, as I ſaid, unto Believers, what they have to deal withal.

Firſt then, it appears in the *violence* it offers to the nature of man, compelling them unto ſins, fully contrary to all the principles of the reaſon-

able

able nature wherewith they are endued from God. Every creature of God hath in its creation, a *Law of operation* implanted in it, which is the rule of all that proceedeth from it, of all that it doth of its own accord. So the fire aſcends upwards, bodies that are weighty and heavy deſcend; the water flows, each according to the Principles of their nature, which give them the *Law of their Operation*. That which hinders them in their operation is force and violence, as that which hinders a *ſtone* from deſcending, or the *fire* from going upwards. That which forceth them to move contrary to the Law of their nature, as a ſtone to go upwards, or the fire to deſcend, is in its kind the greateſt *violence*, of which the degrees are endleſs. Now that which ſhould take a great *Milſtone*, and fling it upwards into the air, all would acknowledge to be a matter of wonderful force, power, and efficacy.

Man alſo hath his *Law of Operation* and working concreated with him. And this may be conſidered two ways; either, firſt, as it is *common* to him with other creatures; or as *peculiar*, with reference unto that ſpecial end for which he was made. Some things are, I ſay, in this *Law of Nature common to man with other creatures*; as to nouriſh their young, to live quietly with them of the ſame kind and race with them; to ſeek and follow after that which is good for them in that ſtate and condition wherein they are created. Theſe are things which all *bruit living creatures* have in the Law of their nature, as Man alſo hath.

But now beſides theſe things, man being created

ated in an *eſpecial manner* to give Glory to God by rational and moral obedience, and ſo to obtain a reward in the enjoyment of him; there are many things in the *Law of his creation* that are peculiar to him; as to *love God above all*, to ſeek the enjoyment of him as his chiefeſt Good and laſt End, to enquire after his Mind and Will, and to yield obedience, and the like. All which are part of the Law of his Nature.

Now theſe things are not diſtinguiſhed ſo, as though a man might perform the actions of the Law of his nature which are common to him with other creatures, meerly from the *principles of his nature* as they do; but the *Law of his dependance upon God*, and doing all things in obedience unto him, paſſeth on them all alſo. He can never be conſidered as a *meer creature*, but as a creature made for the glory of God, by rational moral obedience; *rational*, becauſe by him choſen, and performed with reaſon; and *moral*, becauſe regulated by a *Law* whereunto Reaſon doth attend.

For inſtance; It is common to man with other creatures, to *take care for the nouriſhing of his children*, of the young helpleſs ones that receive their being by him. There is implanted in him, in the principles of his nature concreated with them, a love and care for them; ſo is it with other living creatures. Now let other creatures anſwer this *inſtinct & inclination*, and be not hardned againſt them like the *fooliſh Oſtrich*, unto whom God hath not imparted this natural wiſdom, *Job* 39. 16, 17. they fully anſwer the *Law of their Creation*. With Man it is not ſo; it is not enough for him to

anſwer the *inſtinct* and ſecret impulſe and inclination of his nature and kind, as in the nouriſhing of his children; but he muſt do it alſo in *ſubjection to God*, and obey him therein, and doing it unto his glory; the Law of *Moral Obedience* paſſing over all his whole being, & all his operations; but in theſe things lie, as it were, the *whole* of a man, namely in the things which are implanted in his nature as a creature, common to him with all other living creatures, ſeconded by the Command or Will of God, as he is a creature capable of *yielding moral obedience*, and doing all things for his glory.

That then, which ſhall drive and compel a man to tranſgreſs this *Law of his nature*, which is not only as to *throw milſtones upward*, to drive Beaſts from taking care of their young, to take from Cattle of the ſame kind the *hearding of themſelves* in quietneſs, but moreover, to caſt off what lies in him his *fundamental dependance on God*, as a creature made to yield him obedience, muſt needs be eſteemed of great force and efficacy.

Now this is frequently done by *Indwelling-ſin*, in perſons *unregenerate*. Let us take ſome few inſtances.

First, There is nothing that is more deeply inlaid in the principles of the natures of all living creatures, and ſo of man himſelf, than a love unto, and a care for the preſervation and nouriſhing of their young; many bruit creatures will *die* for them, ſome feed them with their own fleſh and blood; all deprive themſelves of that *food* which nature directs them to as their beſt, to *impart* it

to

to them; and acting in their behalf to the utmoſt of their power.

Now ſuch is the efficacy, power, and force of *Indwelling-ſin* in man, an *infection* that the nature of other creatures knows nothing of, that in many it prevails to ſtop this fountain, to beat back the ſtream of natural affections, to root up the principles of the Law of nature, and to drive them unto a *neglect*, a deſtruction of the *fruit of their own loins*. *Paul* tells us of the old Gentiles, they were ἄστοργοι, *Rom.* 1.31. *without natural affection*; that which he aims at is that barbarous cuſtom among the *Romans*, who oft-times to ſpare the trouble in the education of their children, and to be at liberty to ſatisfie their luſts, *deſtroyed their own children from the womb*. So far did the ſtrength of ſin prevail to obliterate the Law of nature, and to repel the force and power of it.

Examples of this nature are common in all Nations; amongſt our ſelves, of *women murdering their own children*, through the deceitful reaſoning of ſin. And herein ſin turns the ſtrong *current* of nature, darkens all the *light* of God in the ſoul, controuls all natural *principles*, influenced with the power of the command & will of God. But yet this *evil* hath, through the efficacy of ſin, received a fearful aggravation. Men have not only *ſlain*, but cruelly *ſacrificed* their children to ſatisfie their luſts. The Apoſtle reckons *Idolatry*, & ſo conſequently all *ſuperſtition*, among the works of the fleſh, *Gal.* 5.20. that is, the fruit & product of *indwelling ſin*. Now from hence it is that men have offered that horrid and unſpeakable violence to the Law

of Nature mentioned. So the Pſalmiſt tells us, *Pſal.*106.37,38. The ſame is again mentioned, *Pſal.*7. 31. and in ſundry other places. The whole manner of that abomination I have elſewhere declared. For the preſent it may ſuffice to intimate, that they took their children and *burnt them to aſhes* in a ſoft fire; the wicked *Prieſts* that aſſiſted in the ſacrifice affording them this relief, that they made a noiſe and clamour, that the vile wretches might not hear the woful moans and cries of the *poor dying tormented Infants*. I ſuppoſe in this caſe we need no farther evidence. *Naturaliſts* can give no rational account, they can only admire the ſecret force of that *little Fiſh*, which, they ſay, will ſtop a ſhip in full ſail in the midſt of the Sea. And we muſt acknowledge, that it is beyond our power to give an account of that *ſecret force*, and unſearchable deceit that is in this *inbred* Traitor, Sin; that cannot only ſtop the courſe of nature, when all the *ſails* of it that carry it forward are ſo filled, as they are in that of affections to children; but alſo *drive it backward* with ſuch a violence & force, as to cauſe men ſo to deal with their *own children*, as a good man would not be hired with any reward to deal with his *dog*. And it may not be to the diſadvantage of the *beſt*, to know and conſider, that they carry that about them, in them, which in others hath produced theſe effects.

The like may be ſpoken of all other ſins againſt the *prime dictates* of the Law of Nature, that mankind is or hath been ſtained and defamed with: *Murder* of *Parents* and Children, of Wives

and

and Husbands, *Sodomy*, *Inceſt*, and the like enormities; in all which, ſin prevails in men againſt the *whole Law of their Being* and dependance upon God.

What ſhould I reckon up the murders of *Cain* and *Abel*, the treaſon of *Judas*, with their aggravations; or remind the filth and villany of *Nero*, in whom ſin ſeemed to deſign an inſtance of what it could *debaſe the nature* of man unto: In a word, all the ſtudied, premeditated *perjuries*; all the deſigned, bloody *revenges*; all the filth and uncleanneſs; all the enmity to God and his ways that is in the world, is fruit growing from this root alone.

Secondly, It evidences its efficacy in keeping men off from *believing* under the diſpenſation of the Goſpel. This evidence muſt be a little further cleared.

Firſt, Under the diſpenſation of the Goſpel, there are *but few that do believe*. So the Preachers of it complain, *Iſa.* 53. 1. *Who hath believed our report?* which the Apoſtle interprets of the *paucity* of Believers, *Joh.* 12. 38. our Saviour Chriſt himſelf tells us, that *many are called*, the Word is preached unto many, but *few are choſen*. And ſo the Church complains of its number, *Mic.* 6. 1. *Few* there be who enter the *narrow gate*, daily experience confirms this woful obſervation. How many Villages, Pariſhes, yea, Towns may we go unto, where the Goſpel, it may be, hath been preached many years, and perhaps ſcarce meet a *true Believer* in them, & one who ſhews forth the death of Chriſt in his converſation. In the beſt

places, and moſt eminent for profeſſion, are not ſuch perſons like the *berries after the ſhaking of an Olive-tree*, two or three in the top of the upmoſt boughs, and 4 or 5 in the higheſt branches?

Secondly, There is propoſed to men in the preaching of the Goſpel, as *motives unto Believing* every thing in conjunction, that *ſeverally* prevail with men to do what ever elſe they do in their lives. What ever any one doth with conſideration, he doth it either becauſe its *reaſonable* & *good* for him ſo to do, or *profitable* & advantagious, or *pleaſant*, or laſtly, *neceſſary* for the avoidance of evil; whatever, I ſay, men do with conſideration, whether it be good or evil, whether it be in the works of this life, or in things that lead to another; they do it from one or other of the reaſons or motives mentioned. And, God knows, oft-times they are very *poor* and mean in their kind, that men are prevailed upon by. How often will men for a very *little pleaſure*, a very *little profit*, be induced to do that which ſhall imbitter their lives, and damn their ſouls. And what induſtry will they uſe to avoid that which they apprehend *evil* or grievous to them. And any one of theſe is enough to *oil the wheels* of mens utmoſt endeavours, and ſet men at work to the purpoſe.

But now all theſe things centre in the propoſal of the Goſpel, and the *command of Believing*; and every one of them *in a kind*, that the whole world can propoſe nothing like unto it.

It is the moſt *reaſonable thing* that can be propoſed to the underſtanding of a man; that he who thr ough his *own default* hath loſt that *way* of

of bringiug glory to God, and ſaving his own ſoul, (for which ends he was made) that he was firſt placed in, ſhould accept of, and embrace, that other, bleſſed, eaſie, ſafe, excellent *way*, for the attaining the ends mentioned, which God in infinite Grace, Love, Mercy, Wiſdom, and Righteouſneſs hath found out, and doth propoſe unto him. And,

Secondly, It is the *profitableſt* thing that a man can poſſibly be invited unto; if there be any *profit*, or benefit, any advantage in the *forgiveneſs of ſins*, in the love and favour of God, in a bleſſed immortality, in eternal glory. And,

Thirdly, It is moſt *pleaſant* alſo; ſurely it is a pleaſant thing to be brought out of *darkneſs into light*, out of a dungeon unto a Throne, from captivity and ſlavery to Satan and curſed luſts, to the glorious liberty of the children of God, with a thouſand heavenly *ſweetneſſes* not now to be mentioned. And,

Fourthly, It is ſurely *neceſſary*, and that not only from the *command of God*, who hath the Supreme Authority over us, but alſo indiſpenſibly ſo for the avoidance of *eternal ruine* of body and ſoul, *Mat.* 16.16. It is conſtantly propoſed under theſe terms, believe, or you periſh under the weight of the wrath of the great God, and that for evermore.

But now notwithſtanding that all theſe conſiderations are *preached* unto men, and preſſed upon them in the Name of the great God from day to day, from one year to another; yet, as was before obſerved, very *few* there are who ſet their

hearts unto them, ſo as to embrace that which they lead unto. Tell men *ten thouſand times*, that this is Wiſdom, yea, Riches, that all their profit lies in it, that they will aſſuredly and eternally periſh, & that it may be within a few hours, if they receive not the Goſpel, aſſure them that it is their *only intereſt* and concernment, let them know that God himſelf ſpeaks all this unto them; yet all is one, they regard it not, ſet not their hearts unto it, but, as it were, plainly ſay, *We will have nothing to do with theſe things*; they will rather periſh in their luſts than accept of mercy.

Thirdly, It is *Indwelling-ſin* that both diſenableth men unto, and hinders them from believing, & that alone, *Blindneſs* of mind, ſtubbornneſs of the will, ſenſuality of the affections, all concur to keep poor periſhing ſouls at a diſtance from Chriſt. Men are made *blind* by ſin, and cannot ſee his Excellencies, *obſtinate* and will not lay hold of his Righteouſneſs, *ſenſeleſs* and take no notice of their own eternal concernments.

Now certainly that which can prevail with men wiſe and ſober, and prudent in other things, to neglect and deſpiſe the love of God, the blood of Chriſt, the eternal welfare of their own ſouls, upon weak and worthleſs pretences, muſt be acknowledged to have an aſtoniſhable force and efficacy accompanying it.

Whoſe heart, who hath once heard of the ways of God, can but bleed to ſee *poor ſouls* eternally periſhing under a *thouſand gracious invitations*, to accept of mercy and pardon in the blood of Chriſt? And can we but be aſtoniſhed at the power

of

of that principle from whence it is, that they run headlong to their own deſtruction? And yet all this befals them from the power and deceit of *ſin* that dwelleth in them.

3. It is evident in their *total Apoſtaſies.* Many Men not really converted, are much wrought upon by the Word. The Apoſtle tells us, that they do *clean eſcape them that live in Error*, as 2 *Pet.*2. 18. They ſeparate themſelves from Idolatry and falſe Worſhip, owning and profeſſing the Truth; and they alſo eſcape *the pollution of the world*, *ver.* 20. that is, the *corruption that is in the world, through luſt*, as he expreſſeth it, *chap.* 1. *verſe* 4. thoſe filthy corrupt and unclean ways, which the Men of the world, in the purſuit of their luſts, do walk and live in; theſe they *eſcape* from, in the amendment of their lives, and ordering of their Converſation according to the Convictions which they have from the Word. For ſo he tells us, that all this is brought about, *through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt*; that is, by the preaching of the Goſpel; they are ſo far wrought upon, *as to forſake* all ways of falſe Worſhip, to *profeſs* the truth, to *reform* their lives, and to walk anſwerable to the Convictions that are upon them.

By this means do they gain the Reputation of Profeſſors, *They have a Name to live*, Rev. 3. 1. and are made partakers of ſome, or all of thoſe *priviledges* of the Goſpel, that are numbred by the Apoſtle, *Heb.*6.4,5.

It is not my preſent buſineſs to ſhew *how far*, or wherein a Man may be *effectually wrought* upon by

by the Word, and yet not be *really wrought* over to cloſe with Chriſt; or what may be the utmoſt bounds and limits of a *common work* of grace upon unregenerate Men; It is on all hands confeſſed, that it may be carryed on ſo far, that it is very difficult to diſcern between its effects and productions, and thoſe of that Grace which is ſpecial and ſaving.

But now, notwithſtanding all this, we ſee many of theſe daily *fall off from God*, utterly and wickedly ſome into *debaucherie* and uncleanneſs, ſome to *worldlineſs* and covetouſneſs, ſome to be *Perſecutors* of the Saints, all to the perdition of their own ſouls. How this comes about, the Apoſtle declares in that place mentioned; they are, ſaith he, *entangled* again; to *entice and entangle* as I have ſhewed before from *James* 1. 14, 15. is the proper work of *Indwelling Sin*; it is that alone which *entangles* the Soul; as the Apoſtle ſpeaks *v.* 18. *They are allured from their whole Profeſſion*, into curſed Apoſtaſie through the luſts of the fleſh.

It prevails upon them through its deceit and power to an utter *relinquiſhment of their Profeſſion*; and their whole engagement unto God: And this ſeveral ways evinces the greatneſs of its ſtrength and efficacy:

1. In that it giveth ſtop or control unto that *exceeding greatneſs of power* which is put forth in the Word, in their Conviction and Reformation. We ſee it by experience, that Men are not *eaſily wrought* upon by the Word; the moſt of men can live under the diſpenſation of it all the dayes of their

their lives, and continue as ſenſleſs and ſtupid as the *ſeats* they ſit upon, or the flint in the Rock of Stone. Mighty difficulties, and prejudices muſt be conquered, great *ſtroaks* muſt be given to the Conſcience before this can be brought about. It is as the ſtopping of a *River* in his courſe, and turning his ſtreams another way; the hindering of a *ſtone* in his falling downwards, or the turning away of the *wild Aſs*, when furiouſly ſet to purſue his way, as the Prophet ſpeaks, *Jer.* 2. 24. to turn Men from their corrupt ways, ſins and pleaſures, to make them *pray*, *faſt*, *hear*, and do many things contrary to the Principle of fleſh, which is ſecretly predominant in them, willingly and gladly; to cauſe them to *profeſs Chriſt* and the Goſpel, it may be under ſome tryals and reproaches, to give them *Light* to ſee into ſundry myſteries, and *gifts* for the diſcharge of ſundry duties; to make *dead*, blind, ſenſleſs Men, to *walk*, and *talk*, and do all the outward offices and duties of living and healthy Men; with the like attendencies of Conviction and Reformation, are the effects and products of mighty power and ſtrength. Indeed the power that the Holy Ghoſt puts forth by the word, in the ſtaggering and *conviction* of ſinners, in the *wakning* of their Conſciences, the *enlightening* of their minds, the *changing* of their affections, the *awing* of their hearts, the *reforming* of their *lives*, and *compelling* them to duties, is unexpreſſible.

But now, unto all theſe is there *check* and controll given by *Indwelling Sin*. It prevails againſt this *whole work* of the Spirit by the Word, with all

all the advantages of Providential Diſpenſations, in Afflictions and Mercies, wherewith it is attended. When Sin is once enraged, all theſe things become but like the withs & cords wherewith *Sampſon* was bound before his head was ſhaven: Cry but to it, the *Philiſtines* are upon thee, here is a *ſubtle, a ſuitable temptation*, now ſhew thy ſtrength and efficacy, all theſe things become like *Towe that have ſmelt the fire. Conſcience* is ſtifled, *Reputation* in the Church of God deſpiſed, *Light* ſupplanted, the *impreſſions* of the Word caſt off, *convictions* digeſted, Heaven and Hell are deſpiſed; Sin makes its way through all, and utterly turns the Soul from the good and right ways of God. Sometimes it doth this ſubtilly by *imperceptible degrees*, taking off all force of former impreſſions from the Spirit, by the Word, ſullying Conſcience by degrees, hardning the Heart, and making ſenſual the Affections by various workings, that the poor *backſlider in heart* ſcarce knows what he is doing, until he be come to the very bottom of all impiety, profaneneſs, and enmity againſt God. Sometimes falling in conjunction with ſome *vigorous temptation*, it ſuddenly, and at once plunges the Soul into a courſe of alienation from God, and the profeſſion of his ways.

2. It takes them off from thoſe *hopes of Heaven*, which upon their Convictions, Obedience, and *temporary Faith* or believing, they had attained. There is a *general hope of Heaven*, or at leaſt of the eſcaping of Hell, of an *untroubleſome immortality* in the moſt ſottiſh and ſtupid Souls in the World,

World, who either by tradition or inſtruction from the Word, are perſwaded that there is another ſtate of things to come after this life; but it is in *unconvinced*, unenlightened Perſons, a dull, ſenſeleſs, unaffecting thing, that hath no other hold upon them, nor power in them, but only to keep them free from the trouble and perplexity of contrary thoughts and apprehenſions. The matter is otherwiſe with them who by the Word are ſo wrought upon as we have before declared; their *hope of Heaven* and a bleſſed Immortality is oft-times accompanied with great *joyes*, and exultations, and is a relief unto them, under and againſt the worſt of their fears and trials; It is ſuch, as they would not *part withal* for all the World; and upon all occaſions they retreat in their minds unto it, for comfort and relief.

Now all this by the *Power of Sin* are they prevailed withal to forgo. Let Heaven go if it will, a bleſſed Immortality with the enjoyment of God himſelf, Sin muſt be ſerved, and proviſion made to fulfil the luſts thereof.

If a Man, in the things of this World, had ſuch a hope of a large *Inheritance*, of a Kingdom, as wherein he is ſatisfied that it will not fail him, but that in the iſſue he ſhall ſurely enjoy it, and lead an happy and a glorious life in the poſſeſſion of it many dayes; if one ſhould go to him and tell him, It is true, the *Kingdom* you look for is an ample and honourable Dominion, full of all good things deſirable, and you may attain it; but come, caſt away all hopes and expectations

pectations of it, and come joyn with Me in the *ſervice and ſlavery* of ſuch or ſuch an oppreſſing Tyrant. You will eaſily grant; he muſt have ſome ſtrange bewitching power with him, that ſhould prevail with a Man in his wits to follow his advice.

Yet thus it is, and much more ſo in the caſe we have in hand. Sin it ſelf cannot deny, but that the *Kingdom of Heaven* which the Soul is in hope and expectation of, is glorious and excellent, nor doth it go about to convince him, that his thoughts of it are *vain*, and ſuch as will deceive him, but plainly prevails with him to caſt away his *hopes*, to deſpiſe his *Kingdom* that he was in expectation of, and that upon no other motive but that he may ſerve ſome *worldly*, *cruel*, or filthy and ſenſual luſt; Certainly here lies a ſecret efficacy, whoſe depths cannot be fathomed.

3. The Apoſtle manifeſts the power of the entanglements of ſin in and upon *Apoſtates*, in that it turns them off from *the way of righteouſneſs after they have known it*, 2 *Pet.* 2. 21. It will be found at the laſt day *an evil thing and a bitter*, that Men live all their days in the ſervice of ſin, ſelf, and the World, refuſing to make any *trial* of the *ways of God* whereunto they are invited; though they have no experience of their excellency, beauty, pleaſantneſs, ſafety, yet having evidence brought unto them from God himſelf, that they are ſo, the refuſal of them will, I ſay, be *bitterneſs* in the latter end. But their condition is yet far worſe, who as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, having

having *known the way of righteouſneſs*, are by the power of *Indwelling Sin* turned aſide from the holy Commandment. To leave God for the Devil, after a Man hath made ſome trial of *him* and his ſervice; Heaven for Hell; after a Man hath had ſome chearing, refreſhing thoughts of it, the fellowſhip of the Saints, for an *Alehouſe* or a *brothel-houſe*; after a man hath been admitted unto their Communion, and taſted of the pleaſantneſs of it, to leave walking in pure, clear, ſtreight paths, to *wallow in mire*, draughts and filth, this will be for a *lamentation*; Yet this doth ſin prevail upon *Apoſtates* unto; and that againſt all their Light, Conviction, Experiences, Profeſſions, Engagements, or whatever may be *ſtrong* upon them to keep them to the known ways of Righteouſneſs.

4. It evinces its ſtrength in them by prevailing with them unto *a total renunciation of God* as revealed in Chriſt, and the Power of all Goſpel-Truth, *in the Sin againſt the Holy Ghoſt*. I do not now preciſely determine what is the *Sin againſt the Holy Ghoſt*; nor wherein it doth conſiſt. There are different apprehenſions of it; all agree in this; that by it an end is put to *all dealings between God and Man in a way of Grace*. It is a ſin unto death. And this doth the hardneſs and blindneſs of many Mens hearts bring them to; they are by them at length ſet out of the reach of Mercy. *They chuſe to have no more to do with God*; and God ſwears that they ſhall never enter into his Reſt. So *Sin brings forth death*. A Man by it, is brought to renounce the End for which

which he was made; *wilfully* to reject the Means of his coming to the enjoyment of God, to provoke him to his face; and so to perish in his Rebellion.

I have not mentioned these things, as though I hoped by them to set out to the *full the power of Indwelling Sin in unregenerate Men*; only by a few Instances I thought to give a glimpse of it. He that would have a fuller view of it, had need only to *open his eyes*, to take a little view of that wickedness which *reigneth*, yea *rageth* all the World over. Let him consider the prevailing flood of the things mentioned by *Paul* to be *the fruits of the flesh*, Gal. 5. 19,20,21. that is, among the Sons of Men, in all places, Nations, Cities, Towns, Parishes; and then let him add thereunto but this one consideration, that the World, which is full of the steam, filth, and blood of these abominations, as to their outward actings of them, is a *Pleasant Garden*, a *Paradise*, compared to the heart of Man, wherein they are all conceived, and hourly *millions* of more vile abominations, which being stifled in the womb, by some of the wayes before insisted on, they are never able to bring forth to light. Let a Man I say using the Law for his Light and Rule, take this course, and if he have any spiritual discerning, he may quickly attain satisfaction in this matter.

And I shewed in the entrance of this discourse, how this consideration doth fully confirm the Truth proposed.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVII.

The ſtrength of Sin Evidenced from its Reſiſtance unto the power of the Law.

THE meaſure of the ſtrength of any *Perſon*, or *defenced City*, may be well taken from *the oppoſition* that they are able to withſtand, and not be prevailed againſt. If we hear of a City that hath endured *a long ſiege* from a potent Enemy, and yet is not taken or conquered, whoſe walls have endured great *batteries*, and are not demoliſhed, though we have never ſeen the place, yet we conclude it *ſtrong*, if not impregnable.

And this Conſideration will alſo evidence the power and ſtrength of *Indwelling-ſin*; it is able *to hold out*, and not only to *live*, but alſo to ſecure its reign and dominion againſt very ſtrong *oppoſition* that is made unto it.

I ſhall inſtance only in *the oppoſition that is made unto it*, *by the Law*, which is oft-times *great and terrible*, alwayes *fruitleſs*; all its aſſaults are born by it, and it is not prevailed againſt. There are ſundry things wherein the Law *oppoſeth* it ſelf to ſin, and the power of it. As,

Firſt, It *diſcovers* it; ſin in the Soul is like a ſecret *hectical* diſtemper in the body; its being *unknown* and unperceived, is one great means of its prevalency. Or as Traytors in a *Civil State*, whileſt they lye hid, they vigorouſly carry on their deſign. The greateſt part of Men in the World, know nothing of this *ſickneſs*, yea *death* of their Souls. Though they have been taught ſomewhat

of the *doctrine* of it, yet they know nothing of it *power*. They know it not so, as to deal with it as their mortal Enemy. As a Man, whatever he be told, cannot be said to know, that he hath an *hectical Feaver*, if he love his life, and set not himself to stop its progress.

This then the Law doth, it *discovers this enemy*; it convinceth the soul that there is such a traitor harbouring in his bosome, *Rom.* 7. 7. *I had not known sin but by the Law, for I had not known lust, except the Law had said, Thou shalt non covet.* I had not known it, that is, fully, clearly, distinctly. *Conscience* will somewhat tumultuate about it; but a man cannot know it clearly and distinctly from thence. It gives a man such a sight of it, as the blind man had in the Gospel upon the first touch of his eyes, *He saw men like trees walking*, obscurely, confusedly; but when the Law comes, that gives the soul *a distinct sight of this indwelling-sin*. Again, *I had not known it*, that is, the *depths* of it, the root, the habitual inclination of my nature to sin, which is here called *lust*; as it is by *James*, *chap.* 1. 14. I had not known it, or not known it to be sin, but by the Law.

This then the Law doth, it draws out this *Traitor* from its secret lurking places, the intimate recesses of the soul. A man when the Law comes, is no more ignorant of his enemy; if he will now perish by him, it is openly and knowingly; he cannot but say that the Law *warned* him of him, discovered him unto him, yea, and raised a *concourse about him* in the soul of various affections, as an *Officer* doth, that discovers a *Thief* or *Robber*, calling out for assistance to apprehend him.

Secondly,

Secondly, The Law not only *diſcovers* ſin, but diſcovers it to be a very *bad inmate*, dangerous, yea, pernicious to the ſoul. *Rom.* 7. 13. *Was then that which is good* (that is, the Law) *made death unto me? God forbid. But ſin, that it might appear ſin, working death in me by that which is good, that ſin by the commandment might become exceeding ſinful.* There are many things in this *verſe* wherein we are not at preſent concerned; that which I only aim at, is, the *manifeſtation* of ſin by the Law; it *appears to be ſin*; and the manifeſtation of it in its own colours; it appears to be *exceeding ſinful*. The Law gives the ſoul to know the *filth* and *guilt* of this *Indwelling-ſin*, how great they are, how vile it is; what an abomination, what an enmity to God, how hated of him, the ſoul ſhall never more look upon it as a *ſmall matter*, what thoughts ſoever it had of it before, whereby it is greatly ſurprized.

As a man that finds himſelf ſomewhat diſtempered, ſending for a *Phyſician* of skill, when he comes, requires his judgement of his diſtemper. He conſidering his condition, tells him, Alas, I am ſorry for you, the caſe is far otherwiſe with you than you imagine, your *diſeaſe is mortal*, and it hath proceeded ſo far preſſing upon your ſpirits, and infecting the whole *maſs of your blood*, that I doubt unleſs moſt effectual remedies be uſed, you will live but a very few hours.

So is it in this caſe, a man may have ſome *trouble* in his mind and conſcience about *Indwelling-ſin*; he finds all not well, as it ſhould be with him, more from the *effects* of ſin, and its continual eruptions, than the nature of it, which he hopes to wreſtle

withall: but now when the *Law* comes, that lets the ſoul know, that its diſeaſe is *deadly and mortal*, that it is exceding ſinful, as being the root and cauſe of all his alienation from God; and thus alſo the Law proceeds againſt it.

Thirdly, The Law *judgeth the perſon*, or lets the ſinner plainly know what he is to *expect* upon the account of this ſin. This is the Laws proper work, its *diſcovering* property is but *preparative* to its *judging*. The Law is it ſelf, when it is in the Throne. Here it minceth not the matter with ſinners, as we uſe to do one with another, but tells him plainly, *Thou art the man*, in whom this exceeding ſinful ſin doth dwell, and you muſt anſwer for the guilt of it. And this, methinks, if any thing, ſhould *rouze up a man* to ſet himſelf in oppoſition to it, yea, utterly to deſtroy it. The Law lets him know that upon the account of this ſin, he is obnoxious to the curſe and wrath of the great God againſt him; yea, pronounceth the ſentence of *everlaſting condemnation* upon him upon that account: abide in this ſtate and periſh, is its language. It leaves not the ſoul without this *warning* in this world, and will leave it without *excuſe* on that account in the world to come.

Fourthly, The Law ſo follows on its ſentence, that it *diſquiets* and affrights the ſoul, and ſuffers in not to enjoy the leaſt *reſt* or quietneſs in harbouring its ſinful inmate. When ever the ſoul hath indulged to its commands, made proviſion for it, immediately the Law *flies upon it*, with the wrath and terrour of the Lord, makes it quake and tremble; It ſhall have no reſt, but is like a poor beaſt that hath

hath a deadly arrow ſticking in its ſides, that makes it reſtleſs where ever it is, and whatever it doth.

Fifthly, The Law ſtays not here, but alſo it *ſlays* the ſoul, *Rom.* 7. 3. that is, by its conviction of the nature, power, and deſert of this *indwelling-ſin*, it deprives him in whom it is of all that life of *ſelf-righteouſneſs and hope*, which formerly he ſuſtained himſelf withall: It leaves him as a poor, dead, helpleſs, hopeleſs creature. And all this in the purſuit of that oppoſition that it makes againſt this ſin. May we not now expect, that the power of it will be *quelled*, and its ſtrength broken; that it will *die* away before theſe ſtrokes of the Law of God; but the truth is, ſuch is its power and ſtrength, that it is quite otherwiſe; like him whom the *Poets* feign to be born of the Earth, when one thought to ſlay him by caſting him on the ground, by every fall he recovered new ſtrength, and was more vigorous than formerly: So is it with all the falls and repulſes that are given to *Indwelling-ſin* by the Law. For,

Firſt, It is not *conquered*. A conqueſt infers two things in reſpect of the conquered: Firſt, *Loſs of Dominion*; and, ſecondly, *loſs of ſtrength*. Where ever any one is *conquered*, he is diſpoiled of both theſe. He loſeth both his authority and his power. So the ſtrong man armed, being prevailed againſt, he is *bound*, and his *goods* are ſpoiled. But now neither of theſe befalls *Indwelling-ſin* by the aſſaults of the Law; it loſeth not one jot of its *dominion* nor *ſtrength* by all the blows that are given unto it. The *Law cannot* do this thing, *Rom.* 8. 3. it cannot deprive ſin of its power and dominion; for he *that is under the Law is alſo under* ſin;

ſin; that is, what ever power the Law gets upon the conſcience of a man, ſo that he fears to ſin, leſt the ſentence and curſe of it ſhould befall him, yet ſin ſtill *reigns and rules* in his heart. Therefore ſaith the Apoſtle, *Rom.* 6. 14. *Sin ſhall not have dominion over you, for you are not under the Law but under Grace*; intimating plainly that though a Perſon be in never ſo much ſubjection to the Authority of the Law, yet that will not exempt and acquit him from the *dominion of ſin*. Yea, the Law by all its work upon the Soul, inſtead of freeing and acquitting it from the reign of ſin, and bondage unto it, doth accidentally greatly increaſe its miſery and bondage; As the ſentence of the Judge on the Bench againſt a Malefactor adds to his miſery. The Soul is under the *dominion of ſin*, and it may be, abides in its wofull condition in much ſecurity, fearing neither Sin nor Judgement. The Law ſetting upon him in this condition by all the wayes forementioned, brings him into great trouble and perplexity, fear and terrour, but *delivers him not at all*. So that it is with the Soul, as it was with the *Iſraelites* when *Moſes* had delivered his Meſſage unto *Pharaoh*, they were ſo far from getting liberty by it, that their bondage was increaſed, *and they found that they were in a very evil caſe*; Exod. 5. 17. yea and we ſhall ſee, that ſin doth like *Pharaoh*; finding its rule diſturbed, it grows more *outragiouſly oppreſſive*, and doubles the bondage of their Souls. This is not then the work of the Law to *deſtroy* ſin, or deprive it of that dominion which it hath by nature.

Nor doth it by all theſe *ſtroaks of the Law* loſe any thing of its *ſtrength*. It continues both its authority

authority and its force; It is neither deſtroyed, nor weakned. Yea,

Secondly, It is ſo far from being *conquered*, that it is only *enraged*. The whole work of the Law, doth only provoke and enrage ſin, and cauſe it as it hath opportunity, to put out its ſtrength with more power and vigour and force than formerly: This the Apoſtle ſhews at large, *Rom.* 7. 9, 10, 11, 12, 13.

But you will ſay, Do we not ſee it by experience; that many are wrought upon by the *preaching of the Law* to a relinquiſhment of many ſins, and amendment of their Lives, and to a great contending againſt the Eruptions of thoſe other corruptions which they cannot yet mortifie, and it cannot be denyed, but that great is the power and *efficacy* of the Law, when preached and applyed to the Conſcience in a due manner: I anſwer,

Firſt, It is acknowledged, that very great and effectual is the power of the Law of God. Great are the effects that are wrought by it, and it ſhall ſurely accompliſh every *end* for which of God it is appointed. But yet the *ſubduing of ſin*, is none of its work; it is not deſigned of God unto that purpoſe; and therefore it is no diſhonour, if it cannot do that which is not its proper work, *Rom.* 8. 3.

Secondly, Whatever effects it have upon *ſome*, yet we ſee that in the *moſt*, ſuch is the power and prevalency of ſin, that it takes no impreſſion at all upon them. May you not ſee every where men living many years in Congregations where the *Law is powerfully preached*, and applyed unto the Conſciences as to all the ends and purpoſes for which the Lord is pleaſed to make uſe of it, and not once be moved by it; that receive no more

impreſſion from the ſtroaks of it, than blows with a ſtraw would give to an *Adamant*. They are neither *convinced* by it, nor *terrifyed*, nor *awed*, nor *inſtructed*, but continue deaf, ignorant, ſenſleſs, ſecure, as if they had never been told of the guilt of ſin, or terrour of the Lord. Such as theſe are Congregations full of, who proclaim the *triumphing power* of ſin, over the diſpenſation of the Law.

Thirdly, When any of the Effects mentioned are wrought, it is not from the power of *the letter of the Law*, but from the actual efficacy of the Spirit of God, putting forth his vertue & power for that end and purpoſe; And we deny not but that the Spirit of the Lord is able to reſtrain and quell the power of luſt when he pleaſeth; and ſome wayes whereby he is pleaſed ſo to do we have formerly conſidered. But,

Fourthly, Notwithſtanding all that may be obſerved of the *power of the Law* upon the Souls of Men, yet it is moſt evident that Luſt is not *conquered*, nor ſubdued, nor mortified by it. For,

Firſt, Though the *courſe* of ſin may be *repelled* for a ſeaſon by the diſpenſation of the Law, yet the *Spring* and Fountain of it, is not dryed up thereby. Though it withdraws and hides it ſelf for a ſeaſon, it is as I have elſewhere ſhewed, but to *ſhift* out of a ſtorm, and then to return again. As a *Travailer*, in his way meeting with a violent ſtorm of thunder and rain, immediately turns out of his way, to ſome Houſe or Tree for his ſhelter; but yet this cauſeth him not to *give over his Journey*; ſo ſoon as the ſtorm is over, he returns to his way and progreſs again. So is it with Men in *bondage* unto ſin: They are in a courſe of purſuing their luſts; the *Law* meets with them in a ſtorm of thunder and light-

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ning from Heaven, terrifies and hinders them in their way; this turns them for a *ſeaſon* out of their courſe, they will run to prayer or amendment of life, for ſome ſhelter from the ſtorm of wrath which is feared coming upon their Conſciences. But is their courſe ſtopped, are their Principles altered? not at all; ſo ſoon as the ſtorm is over, that they begin to wear out that ſenſe and the terrour that was upon them, they return to their former courſe, in the ſervice of ſin again. This was the ſtate with *Pharaoh* once and again.

Secondly, In ſuch ſeaſons ſin is not *conquered* but *diverted*. When it ſeems to fall under the power of the Law, indeed it is only *turned* into a new channell, it is not dryed up. If you go and ſet a *damm* againſt the ſtreams of a River, that you ſuffer no water to paſs in the old courſe and channel, but it breaks out another way, and turns all its ſtreams in a new courſe, you will not ſay you have *dryed up that River*; though ſome that come and look into the *old channel* may think perhaps that the waters are utterly gone; ſo is it in this caſe; the ſtreams of ſin it may be run in open *ſenſuality*, and profaneneſs; in drunkenneſs and vitiouſneſs; the *preaching of the Law* ſets a *damm* againſt theſe courſes; Conſcience is terrified, and the Man dares not walk in the wayes wherein he hath been formerly ingaged; His *Companions* in ſin not finding him in his *old wayes* begin to laugh at him, as one that is *converted* and growing preciſe; Profeſſors themſelves begin to be perſwaded, that the work of God is upon his heart, becauſe they ſee his old ſtreams dryed up; but if there have been only a *work of the Law* upon him, there is a *damm* put to his courſe, but the

Spring

Spring of ſin is not dryed up, only the ſtreams of it are turned another way: It may be the Man is fallen upon other more *ſecret*, or more *ſpiritual* ſins; or if he be beat from them alſo, the whole ſtrength of luſt and ſin will take up its reſidence in ſelf-righteouſneſs, and pour out thereby as filthy ſtreams as in any other way whatever. So that notwithſtanding the *whole work of the Law* upon the Souls of Men, *Indwelling-ſin* will keep *alive* in them ſtill, which is another evidence of its great power and ſtrength.

I ſhall yet touch upon ſome other evidences of the ſame truth, that I have under conſideration; but I ſhall be brief in them: In the next place then, the great *endeavours of Men ignorant of the Righteouſneſs of Chriſt* for the *ſubduing* and mortifying of ſin, which are all fruitleſs, do evidence the great ſtrength and power of it.

Men who have no *ſtrength againſt ſin*, may yet be made ſenſible of the *ſtrength of ſin*. The way whereby for the moſt part they come to that knowledge, is by ſome previous ſenſe that they have of the *guilt* of ſin. This Men have by the Light of their Conſciences; they cannot avoid it: This is not a thing in their choyce, whether they will or no, they cannot but know ſin to be evil, and that ſuch an evil that renders them obnoxious to the Judgement of God. This galls the Minds and Conſciences of ſome ſo far, as that they are kept in awe, and dare not ſin as they would. Being awed with a ſenſe of the guilt of ſin, and the terrour of the Lord, Men begin to endeavour to *abſtain from ſin*, at leaſt from ſuch ſins as they have been moſt terrified about. Whileſt they have this deſign in hand, the

ſtrength

ſtrength and power of ſin begins to diſcover it ſelf unto them; They begin to finde that there is *ſomething in them*, that is not in their own power; for notwithſtanding their reſolutions and purpoſes, they *ſin ſtill*; and that ſo, or in ſuch a manner, as that their Conſciences inform them that they muſt therefore perith eternally. This puts them on *ſelf-endeavours* to ſuppreſs the eruption of ſin, becauſe they cannot be quiet unleſs ſo they do; nor have any reſt or peace within. Now being ignorant of that only way whereby ſin is to be mortified, that is *by the Spirit of Chriſt*, they fix on many wayes in their own ſtrength to ſuppreſs it, if not to ſlay it; as being ignorant of that only way whereby Conſciences burthened with the guilt of ſin may be pacified, that is by the blood of Chriſt; they endeavour by many other wayes to accompliſh that end in vain, for no Man by any ſelf-endeavours can obtain peace with God. Some of the wayes whereby they endeavour to ſuppreſs the power of ſin, which caſts them into an unquiet condition, and their inſufficiency for that end, we muſt look into.

Firſt, They will promiſe and bind themſelves by *Vows* from thoſe ſins, which they have been moſt liable unto, and ſo have been moſt perplexed withall. The *Pſalmiſt* ſhews this to be one great Engine whereby falſe and *hypocritical* Perſons do endeavour to extricate and deliver themſelves out of trouble and perplexity; They make *Promiſes to God*; which he calls, *flattering him with the lips*, Pſal. 78. 36. So is it in this caſe; being freſhly galled with the guilt of any ſin, that by the power of their temptations, they, it may be, have frequently been overtaken in, they *vow* and *promiſe*, that at leaſt for ſome

ſuch

ſuch ſpace of time as they will limit, they will not commit that ſin again, and this courſe of proceeding is preſcribed unto them by ſome who pretend to direct their Conſciences in this Duty. Conſcience of this, now makes them watch over themſelves as to the outward act of the ſin that they are galled with; and ſo it hath one of theſe two effects; for either they do abſtain from it for the time they have prefixed; or they do not: If they do not, as ſeldom they do, eſpecially if it be a ſin that hath a peculiar root in their nature and conſtitution, and is improved by cuſtom into an habit; if any ſuitable temptation be preſented unto them; their ſin is increaſed, and therewith their terrour, and they are wofully diſcouraged in making any oppoſition to ſin; and therefore for the moſt part after *one* or two vain attempts, or more it may be, knowing no other way to mortifie ſin, but this of *vowing* againſt it, and keeping of that Vow in their own ſtrength, they give over *all conteſts*, and become wholly the ſervants of ſin, being bounded only by outward conſiderations, without any ſerious endeavours for a recovery. Or *Secondly*, ſuppoſe that they have ſucceſs in their Reſolutions, and do abſtain from actual ſins their appointed ſeaſon; commonly one of theſe two things enſue; either they think that they have *well diſcharged their Duty*, and ſo may a little now, at leaſt for a ſeaſon, indulge to their corruptions, and luſts, and ſo are entangled again in the ſame ſnares of ſin as formerly; or elſe they reckon that their *vow and promiſe* hath preſerved them, and ſo *ſacrifice to their own net and drag*, ſetting up a Righteouſneſs of their own againſt the grace of God; which is ſo far from weakning *Indwelling-ſin*, that it

it ſtrengthens it in the root and Principle, that it may hereafter reign in the Soul in ſecurity. Or at the moſt, the beſt ſucceſs that can be imagined unto this way of dealing with ſin, is but the *reſtraining* of ſome outward eruptions of it, which tends nothing to the weakning of its power; and therefore ſuch perſons by all their endeavours are very far from being freed from the inward *toyling*, *burning*, diſquieting, perplexing power of ſin. And this is the ſtate of moſt Men that are kept in *bondage* under the power of *conviction*; Hell, Death, and the Wrath of God are continually preſented unto their *Conſciences*; this makes them labour with all their ſtrength againſt that in ſin which moſt enrageth their Conſciences, and moſt increaſeth their fears; that is the *actual eruption* of it; for, for the moſt part while they are freed from that, they are ſafe; though in the mean time, ſin lye tumultuating in and defiling of the heart continually. As with running ſores, outward *repelling medicines* may skin them over, and hinder their corruption from coming forth; but the iſſue of them is, that they cauſe them to *feſter* inwardly, and ſo prove, though it may be not ſo *noyſome* and offenſive as they were before, yet far more *dangerous*. So is it with this repelling of the power of corruption by *Mens Vows*, and promiſes againſt it; *external eruptions* are it may be reſtrained for a ſeaſon; but the *inward root* and principle is not weakned in the leaſt. And moſt commonly this is the iſſue of this way; that *ſin* having gotten more ſtrength, and being enraged by its reſtraint, breaks all its bounds, and captivates the Soul unto all filthy abominations; which is the Principle as was before obſerved

served of most of the *visible Apostasies* which we have in the World, 2 *Pet.* 2. 19, 20.

The Holy Ghost compares sinners, because of the *odious*, fierce, poysonous nature of this *Indwelling-sin*, unto *Lyons*, *Bears*, and *Asps*, *Isa.* 11. 6, 7, 8, 9. Now this is the excellency of Gospel-grace, that it changes the *Nature* and inward Principles of these otherwise passionate and untamed Beasts, making the *Wolf* as the *Kid*, the *Lyon* as the *Lamb*, and the *Bear* as the *Cow*. When this is effected, they may safely be trusted in; a *little Childe may lead them*: But these *self-endeavours* do not at all change the Nature, but restrain their outward violence: He that takes a *Lyon*, or a *Wolf*, and shuts him up from ravening, whilest yet his inward violence remains, may well expect that at one time or other they will break their bonds, and fall to their former wayes of rapine and violence. However, shutting them up, doth not as we see, change their Natures, but only restrain their *rage* from doing open spoyl. So it is in this case; it is Grace alone that *changeth the heart*, and takes away that poyson and fiercerness that is in them by nature; Mens *self-endeavours* do but coerce them [illegible] to some outward eruptions. But,

Secondly, Beyond bare *Vows and Promises* with some watchfulness to observe them in a rational use of ordinary means, Men have put, and some do yet put themselves on *extraordinary wayes* of mortifying sin. This is the foundation of all that hath a *shew of Wisdom and Religion* in the Papacy; their hours of Prayer, Fastings, their immuring and cloystering themselves, their Pilgrimages, Penan-

ces,

ces, and ſelf-torturing Diſcipline, ſpring all from this root. I ſhall not ſpeak of the *innumerable evils* that have attended theſe ſelf-invented wayes of *Mortification*, and how they all of them have been turned into means, occaſions, and advantages of ſinning; nor of *the horrible hypocriſie* which evidently cleaves unto the moſt of their Obſervers; nor of that *ſuperſtition* which gives life to them all, being a thing riveted in the natures of ſome, and their conſtitutions, fixed on others by inveterate prejudices; and the ſame by others taken up for ſecular advantages; but I will ſuppoſe the beſt that can be made of it, and it will be found to be *a ſelf-invented deſign* of Men ignorant of the Righteouſneſs of God, to give a check to this power of *Indwelling-ſin* whereof we ſpeak. And it's almoſt incredible, what fearfull *ſelf-macerations*, and horrible ſufferings this deſign hath carryed Men out unto: And undoubtedly their *blind zeal and ſuperſtition* will riſe in judgement, and condemn the horrible ſloth and negligence of the moſt of them to whom the Lord hath granted the ſaving Light of the Goſpel. But what is the end of theſe things? The Apoſtle in brief gives us an account; *Rom.* 9. 31, 32. *They attain not the Righteouſneſs aimed at*; they come not up unto a conformity to the Law; *ſin is not mortified*; no nor the power of it weakned; but what it loſeth in ſenſual, in carnal pleaſures, it takes up with great advantage, in blindneſs, darkneſs, ſuperſtition, ſelf-righteouſneſs, and ſoul-pride, contempt of the Goſpel, and the righteouſneſs of it, and reigns no leſs, than in the moſt profligate ſinners in the World.

Laſtly

Laſtly, The ſtrength, efficacy and power of this Law of Sin, may be farther evidenced from its life and in-being in the Soul, notwithſtanding the wound that is given unto it, in the firſt converſion of the Soul to God; and the continual oppoſition that is made unto it by Grace. But this is the ſubject and deſign of another Endeavour.

It may now be expected, that we ſhould here adde the eſpecial *Uſes* of all this diſcovery that hath been made of the *Power*, *Deceit*, *Prevalency* and *Succeſs*, of this great Adverſary of our Souls. But as for what concerns that Humility, ſelf-Abaſement, Watchfulneſs, Diligence, and Application unto the Lord Chriſt for relief, which will become thoſe who find in themſelves by Experience the power of this Law of Sin, have been occaſionally mentioned and inculcated through the whole preceding Diſcourſe, ſo for what concerns the actual *Mortification* of it, I ſhall only recommend unto the Reader for his Direction, another ſmall Treatiſe written long ſince unto that purpoſe, which I ſuppoſe he may do well to conſider together with this, if he find theſe things to be his Concernment.

To the Only Wiſe God our Saviour, be Glory and Majeſty, Dominion, and Power, both Now and Ever. Amen.

FINIS.